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## A RAND NOTE

The Defense Policy of the Soviet Union

Edward L. Warner III

August 1989

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This Note offers a synoptic review of the defense policy of the Soviet Union, including discussions of the organizational framework and pattern of Soviet defense decisionmaking, key elements of Soviet military doctrine and strategy for intercontinental and theater warfare, recent developments in Soviet and conventional forces, and the Soviet approach to arms control. Sources include reports and analyses by U.S. and Soviet scholars and the author's own research and observations made during recent visits to the Soviet Union. Owing to profound domestic economic and political crises, the strength of the Soviet Union is being questioned at home and abroad. Although the military continues to exert important influence and expertise in defense matters, even under the current restructuring (perestroika) the senior party leadership makes the final decisions.

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## PREFACE

This Note analyzes the military policy of the Soviet Union, including such aspects as its national security objectives, organizational structure, military doctrine and strategy, defense decisionmaking processes, budget, nuclear and conventional force postures, weapons development and acquisition practices, and arms control policies. It covers developments from the early 1950s through April 1989. An earlier version of this analysis is to be published as a chapter in *Comparative Defense Policy*, edited by Col. Douglas Murray and Col. Paul Viotti, Department of Political Science, United States Air Force Academy (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md., 1989).

During the time the author was conducting the research for this study, he was simultaneously engaged in related work under the National Security Strategies Program of Project AIR FORCE. While not formally a product of that research, which is being reported in other RAND publications, the present Note relates to portions of it. The study should be of interest to members of the policymaking and intelligence communities concerned with Soviet military strategy, both conventional and nuclear, now and in the future.

## SUMMARY

### NATIONAL OBJECTIVES, NATIONAL STRATEGY, AND MILITARY DOCTRINE

The Soviet Union's most fundamental national security objectives are the maintenance of its territorial integrity and the defense of the communist regime. As the central element of their national security strategy during the past 30 years, the Soviets have relentlessly improved their military forces and relied on them to protect and advance their interests throughout the world. They assign the highest priority to the protection of the Soviet Union and their Eastern European Warsaw Pact allies, especially against nuclear attack.

Sustained economic and political stagnation in the late 1970s and early 1980s produced a severe crisis in the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev, the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Soviet president, is attempting to surmount this crisis through an ambitious *perestroika* (restructuring) program that strives for fundamental economic, political, and social reform.

Since the latter half of 1988, Gorbachev has indicated his determination to divert substantial resources—financial, material, and human—from defense to other sectors of the Soviet economy. He announced in December 1988 and January 1989 that the Soviet Union intends to cut the size of its armed forces by 10 percent (500,000 men), to eliminate thousands of tanks, artillery pieces, and combat aircraft, and to reduce defense spending by some 14 percent over the next two years.

The "new political thinking" of the Gorbachev period has also brought dramatic changes in the Soviet view of defense requirements. The Soviets now maintain that "reasonable sufficiency"—or what the professional military calls "sufficiency for defense"—governs their preparations for both strategic nuclear and theater conventional forces. Reasonable sufficiency, they say, calls for deep cuts in the strategic nuclear arsenals of both superpowers while maintaining rough numerical parity. The residual forces of each superpower would remain capable of inflicting catastrophic devastation in retaliation on the other even if subjected to a surprise first strike. These potential changes regarding the overall size of their strategic nuclear arsenal notwithstanding, the Soviets' operational doctrine for the employment of their capable strategic arsenal almost certainly continues to call for the devastation of the key military, economic, and political assets of any aggressor.

**The Soviets also claim to seek a "reasonably sufficient" posture for theater warfare.** Their long-term object in this regard is to deeply reduce and drastically reconfigure the air and ground forces of the Warsaw Pact and NATO so as to preclude a successful surprise attack by either side and ultimately rule out the mounting of large-scale offensive operations altogether. Despite these declared "purely defensive" intentions, over the past decade **the Soviets have developed a well-reasoned combined-arms force employment doctrine and impressive military capabilities to fight successfully in theater conflicts.**

**The Soviets prepare for war fought with either conventional or nuclear weapons in the various theaters of military operations (TVDs) surrounding the Soviet Union.** Should war occur, they would prefer, however, to mount a large-scale theater strategic offensive operation carried out solely with conventional weapons. This campaign would feature a combined-arms air-land offensive along several main axes of attack so as to rapidly defeat the enemy's forces and occupy his territory. They would also mount an air offensive, the focal point of which would be an "air operation" featuring a series of massed raids combining the efforts of more than a thousand fighters, fighter-bombers, and bombers carried out over several days.

Plans for naval operations in a theater conventional war emphasize the destruction of enemy naval combatants, in particular aircraft carriers and cruise-missile-equipped surface ships and submarines capable of striking Soviet forces and targets in the Soviet Union. They also call for the defense of Soviet strategic, missile-carrying submarines in heavily protected "bastion areas" in the waters off the Kola and Kamchatka peninsulas, as well as the interdiction of the enemy's sea lines of communication.

**Soviet doctrine regarding preparations for nuclear war fought in theaters around the USSR or against the U.S. homeland reveals a strong predisposition to launch a preemptive strike against U.S. nuclear forces if the USSR can reliably detect U.S. preparations to initiate nuclear operations.** If they do not preempt, the Soviets apparently plan to launch on tactical warning or under attack, or failing that, to retaliate after absorbing the initial U.S. strike. They intend to strike the full range of military, economic, and political targets to destroy U.S. war-making capacity and break the American will to resist.



## DECISIONMAKING FOR DEFENSE

Many organizations within the vast Soviet party and government bureaucracies participate in defense policy development. **The Politburo of the CPSU, which sits atop the defense policymaking pyramid, may be presumed to formally approve all key defense decisions involving the formulation of military strategy, the development and acquisition of weapons, the organization of the military establishment, the composition of the defense budget, and the threat to use and the actual employment of Soviet military power.**

Traditionally chaired by the CPSU general secretary, now Mikhail Gorbachev, the combined civilian and military membership of the **Defense Council oversees peacetime weapons development and procurement, doctrinal developments, defense budgets, and major force deployments.** In wartime, it would probably provide the nucleus for something like the State Defense Committee that directed the overall Soviet war effort in World War II.

**The day-to-day activities of gathering and interpreting information, developing and analyzing defense policy alternatives, and carrying out the actions mandated by the top party leadership largely fall to the Ministry of Defense. The most important elements of the ministry are its collegium, the General Staff, the five military services of the Soviet Armed Forces (the Strategic Rocket Forces, Air Defense Forces, Navy, Ground Forces, and Air Forces), and the main directorates (including Rear Services, Civil Defense, Armaments, Construction and Billeting, Inspection, and Cadres).**

The five military services, each under the command of a service commander in chief who is also a deputy minister of defense, carry out the peacetime training and equipping of their various forces. In wartime, the service chiefs would participate in the direction of combat operations as members of the General Headquarters (*Stavka*) of the Supreme High Command.

Although the Ministry of Defense plays the major role in the policy preparation and implementation stages in most defense-related matters, several civilian organizations play active roles as well. These include the nine defense production ministries and various institutes of the Academy of Sciences. During the Gorbachev period, leading civilian academic specialists have become increasingly active in seeking to influence Soviet defense policy. They have publicly articulated new security policy objectives, completed detailed analyses of alternative Soviet force postures, and engaged in public debates with senior military leaders about the proper organization of the armed forces and the content of Soviet military doctrine.

The Soviet defense establishment, like all of the Soviet system, operates within the confines of the five-year and annual economic plans. The defense plans are formulated by the Ministry of Defense and by the key defense production ministries. The General Staff apparently prepares the defense budget plans, which the Defense Council and the Politburo must ultimately approve.

## RECURRING ISSUES

**Civil-Military Relations.** Since 1918, the military has operated under the firm control of the CPSU civilian leadership. The Ministry of Defense plays a major role in the indoctrination of Soviet youth prior to their conscription into the armed forces. The Main Political Administration, an integral part of the Soviet Armed Forces, oversees the communist indoctrination of both enlisted men and officers. Political officers also share with military commanders the responsibility for the combat readiness and military discipline of their units.

**Weapons Acquisition and Force Posture.** The Soviet weapons acquisition process involves a mixture of "demand-pull" and "design-push" developments. The development process itself is marked by widespread competition among design bureaus; the continued use of austere, uncomplicated, and frequently crudely finished subsystems in many weapons systems; and significant conservatism in the development of new weapons. However, this pattern of weapons development has not kept the Soviets from making significant innovations and turning out increasingly sophisticated weaponry.

**Strategic Nuclear Forces.** Soviet strategic offensive nuclear strike capabilities of the late 1980s include both regional and intercontinental-range components. In both cases, these capabilities include a mix of land-based ballistic missiles under the control of the Strategic Rocket Forces, submarine-borne missiles of the Navy, and bombers of the "shock" air armies of the Supreme High Command. **The central strategic forces have at their disposal some 10,900 intercontinental-range weapons, of which about 60 percent are land-based ICBMs, 31 percent submarine-launched missiles, and 9 percent bomber-carried missiles and bombs.** The approximately 1400 land-based ICBMs carry more than 6500 weapons (over 800 ICBMs have between four and ten independently targetable warheads each). The Soviets also maintain sizable regional nuclear forces capable of striking targets in Europe and Asia.

**Strategic Defense.** The Soviets have long maintained a large and expensive strategic air- and missile-defense capability. **In 1988, the Air Defense Forces fielded a combined force of some 9000 surface-to-air missiles, 2250 fighter-interceptors, and a comprehensive radar early warning and control network to defend the Soviet Union against enemy aircraft.** They are now deploying new airborne warning and control systems, improved air-to-air missiles, more effective SAMs and fighter-interceptors with "look-down, shoot-down" capabilities in substantial numbers.

**Theater Forces.** The Soviet Army today is fully motorized and equipped with highly effective tanks, armored fighting vehicles and artillery systems, as well as some of the world's most modern tactical missiles, antitank weapons, and mobile air defense missiles and guns. Moreover, it is supported by a large and increasingly capable tactical air arm that combines armed helicopters and modern fighter-bombers. **The net result is the world's largest and most powerful standing army, led by a well-trained, dedicated officer corps and prepared to wage armor-heavy, blitzkrieg warfare (conventional or nuclear), with considerable air support in various theaters around the Soviet Union.**

**Naval Forces.** The Soviets have achieved a genuine blue-water capability based on a force of **274 modern surface warships of the light frigate class or larger.** These warships include the first of a new class of large, angle-decked aircraft carriers, four light carriers, two antisubmarine warfare cruisers, new generations of missile-equipped cruisers and destroyers, submarines armed with antiship and land attack cruise missiles, and the new, quiet attack submarines. At the same time, Naval Aviation has improved with the addition of modern bombers and fighter-bombers.

**Force Projection.** The Soviet Union's capability to move forces into adjacent areas is inherent in its extensive theater warfare capabilities. The Soviets have also substantially increased their long-distance force projection effectiveness with the acquisition of long-range air and sea transport, increased experience in mounting distant operations, and access to overseas facilities to support such activities. This combination greatly increases the Kremlin's flexibility in the possible use of military power to advance Soviet interests in the Third World. Despite these improvements, however, the Soviet Union continues to have only a limited capability to project military power into distant areas in the face of substantial local or rival power armed opposition.

**Arms Control.** Gorbachev has offered a steady stream of arms control proposals, some highly utopian, others more pragmatic. His proposals in 1986 and 1987 culminated in **the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987.**

This agreement **will eliminate all U.S. and Soviet land-based missiles with ranges between 500 and 5500 kilometers by mid-1991.** Other Gorbachev proposals have fostered substantial U.S.-Soviet agreement on a draft treaty in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks; if signed, this treaty would probably reduce each superpower's inventory of central strategic weapons by 20 to 30 percent.

The Soviets have also proposed major reductions in conventional weapons. The most recent such proposal calls for a three-stage disarmament process beginning with asymmetrical reductions to eliminate imbalances in selected "offensive" conventional arms, including the tanks, artillery, armored infantry vehicles, combat helicopters, and "strike" aviation that NATO and Warsaw Pact member states deploy throughout Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals."

**Proposals for the stage-one reductions in selected armaments and their associated manpower are being discussed at the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe, which opened in Vienna in March 1989. Later stages would look toward additional large-scale reductions on both sides and ultimately a basic restructuring of Warsaw Pact and NATO forces to prevent either side's mounting a surprise attack or conducting any large-scale offensive operations. This proposal implies the complete dismantling of the conventional blitzkrieg capabilities that the Soviets have worked so long and hard to acquire.**

**Use of Force.** The Soviets have frequently used military power to protect and advance their interests throughout the world, for example, to expand their frontiers, as in World War II, and to impose and maintain subservient communist regimes beyond their borders in Eastern Europe and Mongolia. In addition, they have provided arms and advisers to the communist movements and regimes in China, Vietnam, and Cuba over several decades. More recently, they have failed over a nine-year period to defeat the anticommunist rebellion in Afghanistan and finally withdrew their forces in February 1989. They have also used military aid to gain entree into the Third World countries such as Angola and Ethiopia. However, their military activism in the Third World tapered off significantly during the 1980s.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**Owing to profound domestic economic and political crises, the strength of the Soviet Union worldwide is increasingly being questioned at home and abroad.**

Moreover, the steady growth of Soviet military power does not appear to have importantly strengthened the hand of the military on the Soviet domestic scene. On the contrary, the

military have lost political influence and are receiving heavy considerable criticism in the context of the *perestroika* campaign. The military leadership nevertheless remains a potentially important institutional group with clearly recognized expertise and influence regarding the defense matters for which they are primarily responsible. The final decisions regarding defense matters, however, continue to rest with the senior party leadership.

In recent years the Soviets have had difficulty in translating their impressive military capabilities into political leverage. While they remain fully capable of using their overwhelming military force, if required, to maintain order in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and company appear less inclined than their predecessors to do so. One can be less certain about the manner in which the Soviets are likely to use their military power in the future as a means to deal with other neighboring states or in more distant areas. In light of the improvements in Soviet power projection potential and the virtual certainty that instability will continue to characterize the international political scene, however, the potential for the use of military power as a means to protect and advance Soviet interests cannot be ruled out.

## ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

ABM	antiballistic missile
ALCM	air-launched cruise missile
ASW	antisubmarine warfare
AWACS	airborne warning and control system
CEMA	Council for Economic Mutual Assistance
CinC	commander in chief
COMECON	(see CEMA)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
<i>demokratizatsiya</i>	democratization
DOSA AF	Volunteer Society for the Support of the Army, Air Force, and Navy
EMT	equivalent megatons
front	group of armies
<i>glasnost</i>	openness or candor
Gosplan	State Planning Committee
GSFG	Group of Soviet Forces Germany
HQ	headquarters
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IMEMO	Institute of World Economy and International Relations
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (Treaty)
IUSAC	Institute for the Study of the United States and Canada
KGB	Committee of State Security
Komsomol	Young Communist League
KZ	<i>Krasnaya zvezda</i> (Red Star)
LPAR	large phased-array radar
MAD	mutual assured destruction
MEMO	<i>Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia</i> (World Economy and International Relations)
MIRV	multiple independently targeted reentry vehicle
MPA	Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs
<i>perestroika</i>	restructuring
PVO	Air Defense (Forces)
RV	reentry vehicle
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SAM	surface-to-air missile
SDI	strategic defense initiative
SLBM	sea-launched ballistic missile
SME	<i>Soviet Military Encyclopedia (Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar')</i>
soviet	council
<i>spetsnaz</i>	<i>(voyska) spetsial'nogo naznacheniya</i> (special purpose [forces])
SSBN	nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine
SSN	nuclear-powered attack submarine
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
<i>Stavka</i>	General Headquarters (of the VGK)
TVD	<i>teatr voyennykh deystvii</i> (theater of military operations)

UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
VGK	Verkhovnoe glavnokomandovanie (Supreme High Command)
VIZh	<i>Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal</i> (Military History Journal)
Voenizdat	<i>Voennoe izdatel'stvo</i> (Military Publishers)
VPK	Military Industrial Commission
VTa	Military Transport Aviation
VTOL	vertical take-off and landing
<i>zampolit</i>	political deputy

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## I. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

As the Soviet Union approaches the 1990s, after over 70 years of communist rule, Mikhail Gorbachev and his colleagues in the Kremlin are bound to view their nation's domestic and international accomplishments with a mixture of pride and very serious concern. During the past half century, the Soviet Union has weathered the self-inflicted human losses of Stalin's forced collectivization campaign and bloody purges of the 1930s, as well as the catastrophic devastation of World War II. The Soviet Union came back from the brink of defeat at the hands of Hitler's armies in 1941-1942 to become the most militarily powerful nation in Europe and Asia.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet government have also realized many of the most cherished foreign policy goals of their czarist Russian predecessor. These include: (1) the expansion of the country's frontiers during World War II and its immediate aftermath with the forcible annexation of the Baltic states, portions of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania in the West, and the southern half of Sakhalin Island and the Kuril Islands in the Far East; (2) the establishment of subservient client regimes throughout most of Eastern Europe in the immediate postwar period; and (3) as the result of sustained efforts since the mid-1950s, greatly increased Russian presence and influence in many other areas, including the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa.

The past 30 years have also witnessed a seemingly inexorable expansion of Soviet military power. This buildup has succeeded in establishing the Soviet Union as a coequal with the United States in this critical dimension of power and has helped the Soviets promote their foreign policy interests aggressively throughout the world. The Soviets have come to recognize, however, that they may have relied too much on the military dimension of their foreign policy. In the current climate of *glasnost* (candor or openness) and "new political thinking," Gorbachev and others have repeatedly called for a more balanced foreign policy approach that reduces reliance on military power, as well as for reductions in the defense burden.

Despite these accomplishments, all is far from well for the Soviet Union in the late 1980s regarding its external and internal fortunes. The Kremlin finds itself facing a series of daunting challenges. The last years of the enfeebled Leonid Brezhnev and the uncertain interregnums of Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko in the late 1970s and early 1980s saw a growing accumulation of domestic problems and a perceptible loss of Soviet

momentum on the world scene. The Soviet political leadership has come to view these developments with very considerable alarm.

Mikhail Gorbachev has spoken of the grave internal crisis facing the Soviet system and said that nothing less is at stake than whether "the Soviet Union will succeed in entering the twenty-first century in the manner befitting a superpower."<sup>1</sup> Consequently, having succeeded to a considerable extent in consolidating his power as the leader of the CPSU and Soviet government, Gorbachev has embarked on a radical *perestroika* reform program designed to restructure the lagging Soviet economy and to rejuvenate the demoralized Soviet populace. Under the banner of "new political thinking," he is simultaneously striving to impart new vigor to Soviet relations with allied, uncommitted, and adversary nations.

#### RELATIVE POWER POSITION OF SOVIET UNION

It has become commonplace to attribute the superpower status of the Soviet Union almost exclusively to its massive military might. Indisputably, defense efforts enjoy very high priority in the Soviet economy. Moreover, military power has played a critical role in the growth of Soviet influence in the world. Yet, Soviet claims to superpower status are not based solely on the country's obvious military prowess.

In aggregate terms, despite its well-known economic difficulties, the Soviet Union remains one of the world's leading industrial nations. With a gross national product of approximately 1.958 trillion dollars, the USSR ranks third in the world, behind the United States and Japan.<sup>2</sup> It possesses a large, skilled work force and an enormous resource base. It leads the world in several economic categories, including annual production of iron ore, steel, cement, petroleum, natural gas, lumber, and machinery, and trails only the United States in aluminum production and electric power generation.<sup>3</sup>

The Soviet economy also displays serious weaknesses. Soviet economic achievements are considerably less impressive when computed on a per capita basis. Viewed from this perspective, the Soviet Union, much as czarist Russia did on the eve of the Revolution in 1917, ranks behind not only the United States but also most of the industrial nations of Western Europe and Asia.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Report of M. S. Gorbachev at the Moscow All-Union Scientific and Practical Conference, December 10, 1984, *Pravda*, December 11, 1984.

<sup>2</sup>*Handbook of Economic Statistics, 1987* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1987), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 118, 122, 123, 125, 130, 134, 136, 137.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32. Today the Soviets and the industrialized nations of the West have been surpassed in GNP per capita by a few of the oil-rich states of the Middle East as well. The economic lag of prerevolutionary Russia has been documented in the modernization research of Professor Cyril Black of Princeton University.

Moreover, for more than a decade, economic growth has been sluggish, averaging only some 2 percent per year. This stands in stark contrast to the respectable growth rate of 4 to 5 percent that the Soviet economy enjoyed throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. The Soviets have been unable to make the transition from extensive to intensive economic development. Their overcentralized system of planning and management has proved too rigid to manage an increasingly complex economy, to sustain an acceptable rate of economic growth, and to support the timely introduction and absorption of new technologies.

Soviet superpower status has a substantial political and ideological component. Undoubtedly, the international appeal of the Soviet system has dimmed significantly in recent years as the world became aware of the shortcomings of the system with regard to the failure of its economy to adopt to the modern technological revolution, its ruthless suppression of political dissent, and its manifest difficulties in providing a relatively prosperous standard of living for the increasingly apathetic general populace. Nevertheless, the USSR retains substantial influence as the foremost power in Eurasia and one with global commitments.

#### THREATS FACING SOVIET UNION

The Soviets have a deep-seated and historically well-founded concern about foreign military invasion across their lengthy land frontiers. As former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Malcolm C. Toon has noted, "Centuries of invasions from both East and West have left their mark on the outlook of the Russian people and its rulers."<sup>5</sup>

Soviet concern about foreign invasion is not based simply on bitter Russian historic experience at the hands of such aggressors as the Mongol hordes of Ghengis Khan and Napoleon's *Grande Armee*. This wariness also reflects direct experience during the Soviet period.

The Soviets assiduously keep alive the memory of several foreign incursions: the invasion by imperial Germany just weeks after the Bolsheviks seized power in November 1917; the military interventions of Britain, France, the United States, and Japan on behalf of the rival White Russian forces who battled the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920; the border clashes with imperial Japan in 1938 and 1939; and, most significantly, the devastating effects of the Nazi invasion and brutal occupation in 1941-1944.<sup>6</sup> Until very

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<sup>5</sup>Statement of Ambassador Malcolm C. Toon, in U.S. Senate, *The SALT II Treaty*, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), part 3, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>The efforts of the Soviet regime to perpetuate popular awareness of the massive

recently, the strong emphasis in Marxist-Leninist ideology on the inevitable hostility of the capitalist powers toward the socialist states and the Soviets' own repeated warnings about the dangers posed by "capitalist encirclement" further intensified the Soviet "siege mentality."<sup>7</sup>

Soviet statements since the end of World War II have left no doubt that the United States has become the USSR's principal adversary. Soviet propaganda has consistently identified the United States as the leading force of "imperialist reaction," dedicated to the defeat of socialism and prepared to attack the Soviet Union at the first indication of Soviet weakness. These warnings reached a heightened "war scare" state during the first years of the Reagan administration, when Soviet leaders and commentators accused the American president of harboring intentions to launch a first strike against the USSR. The tone of Soviet discourse regarding U.S. intentions has moderated substantially since the mid-1980s as Soviet-American relations have significantly improved.

The only other Western nation that has merited similar Soviet concern in the postwar era has been the Federal Republic of Germany. Periodic Soviet attacks on West German "revanchist" goals reflect the deep scars left by two devastating German invasions in this century.

From the mid-1960s until the early 1980s, the Soviets often described the People's Republic of China as a significant external threat. In recent years, this stance has softened significantly, but long-term anxieties about the Chinese undoubtedly persist.

Soviet concern about China has several roots. These include historical distrust that can be traced back to the Mongol dominance of medieval Russia, racial antipathy, intense rivalry for leadership of the international communist movement, and strongly conflicting foreign policy aspirations, particularly in Asia. This distrust also reflects understandable Soviet anxiety about the long-term threat posed by a mammoth neighbor with whom the USSR shares a 4500-mile frontier, a neighbor who has a population of over a billion, a growing nuclear capability, and a suspicious and frequently hostile attitude toward the USSR.

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suffering of the "Great Fatherland War," as the Soviets call their involvement in World War II, is well captured in the title of Hedrick Smith's chapter on this subject, "Patriotism: World War II Was Only Yesterday," in *The Russians* (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), pp. 303-325.

<sup>7</sup>Helmut Sonnenfeldt and William G. Hyland, *Soviet Perspectives on Security*, Adelphi Papers, no. 150 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979), p. 9.

Having noted the Soviet obsession with defense and the threat of foreign invasion, one must not overlook the degree to which the Soviets and their czarist predecessors have successfully employed offensive military power to promote their foreign policy interests and forcibly to expand their frontiers. Neighboring countries, including Finland, Poland, Bulgaria, and Turkey, to say nothing of the formerly independent Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and, most recently, Afghanistan, have periodically suffered Russian military aggression. The Soviet leaders today almost certainly view the international scene more as an arena of substantial opportunity for the advancement of their interests than as a source of threats to the security of the USSR.

The national security concerns of the leaders in the Kremlin are not limited to external considerations. They also take very seriously the threat of organized internal political opposition. Their anxieties in this regard include fears of political opposition and the nationalistic aspirations of several of the minorities within the Soviet multinational state.<sup>8</sup>

Soviet fears of subversion and the attendant internal security measures to deal with this threat continue today, although in much attenuated form compared with the days of Stalin's paranoia and terror. Nevertheless, in the midst of Gorbachev's campaigns for a thoroughgoing *perestroika* (restructuring) of the Soviet political and economic systems and for *glasnost* and *demokratizatsiya* (democratization), the long pent-up nationalist feelings among the minorities in the Caucasus, the Baltic states, and Central Asia have burst forth in unprecedented fashion, in some cases with the explicit endorsement of the party and its senior leaders.

Confronting increasingly strident demands for greater political, economic, and cultural autonomy from these groups, the party and government are seeking to channel nationalist energies into support for the overall reform movement. At the same time, they must try to convince nationalist groups not to make demands that threaten the directing role of the CPSU or the political integrity of the USSR. Violent clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region and between soldiers and demonstrators in Tbilisi, as well as the growing political assertiveness of the "popular

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<sup>8</sup>Until recently, Soviet spokesmen had traditionally attributed such opposition to the "diversionary activities" of foreign adversaries. Harsh internal security measures to deal with the subversive activities of so-called rotten capitalist elements were especially prominent in the early years of the Bolshevik regime. Fears of "class enemies" were manipulated by Stalin in particular to justify the ruthless suppression of political opposition groups in a series of bloody purges in the 1930s.

fronts" in the Baltic republics, indicate the serious problems that Gorbachev faces in successfully containing nationalist sentiments in the USSR.

During its determined pursuit of detente with the West in the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, the Soviet regime made absolutely clear its intention not to relax ideological or political controls on the domestic scene. Rather, the Soviet leadership appeared to believe that it was precisely in such an atmosphere, with its attendant increased contacts with foreigners and their culture, that the tight social controls were most necessary and thus had to be intensified.

In his current *perestroika* campaign, Gorbachev has sought through his *glasnost* policy to loosen censorship to a considerable extent as a means to mobilize support for his extensive reform program. The new, more open political and cultural atmosphere under *glasnost* has led to the release of scores of dissidents and has encouraged and legitimized the public expression of an enormous range of views on virtually any subject. Manuscripts long committed "to the drawer"—manuscripts that could not pass the censor—are being published, previously taboo subjects are being debated, and a Soviet brand of investigative journalism has emerged.

#### SELF-PERCEPTION OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP

The Soviet approach to world affairs contains traditional Russian, Marxist-Leninist, and contemporary *realpolitik* elements. The first two factors reinforce Soviet inclinations toward an authoritarian regime and a heavily regulated economy at home and expansionism on the world scene. Both also call for the defense of the ruling regime as the most fundamental objective of the Soviet state.

The Russian imperial heritage and the Marxist-Leninist tradition alike exhibit strong messianic strains. The Russian tradition included a centuries-old belief that the Russian empire represented the "third Rome," the successor to Byzantium, with responsibilities to defend and expand the true orthodox Christian faith. Moreover, Russia viewed itself as having a special right to exercise hegemony throughout the Slavic areas of southeastern Europe. The imperial tradition also combined an almost mystical veneration of things Russian with a nagging sense of inferiority regarding the superior economic and technological achievements of the industrially advanced West.

Through the late 1970s, Marxist-Leninist ideology gave the Soviets, as the leading communist power, a similar sense of being historically chosen. It also provided an element of long-term optimism by positing that communism will inevitably triumph over capitalism throughout the world. This ideological self-confidence was well captured in Nikita

Khrushchev's famous boast that Soviet communism would eventually "bury" the capitalist West. The prolonged stagnation of the Soviet economy and declining appeal of the communist ideology since the mid-1970s appears, however, to have significantly eroded Soviet self-confidence about their destiny. Soviet leaders and citizens increasingly doubt the ability of the Soviet communist system to cope with the complex challenges of modernity.

Both traditions have reinforced Soviet tendencies toward an expansionist foreign policy. The gradual incorporation of contiguous areas along Russia's lengthy European and Asian frontiers through the force of arms characterized the czarist pattern of territorial aggrandizement. The imperial Russian regimes were not, however, without longer-range ambitions, as evidenced by various diplomatic initiatives and involvements in Western Europe, the Far East, the Middle East, and even Africa.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it was perfectly reasonable to expect that any twentieth-century Russian government, having industrialized and thus begun to realize the country's immense geopolitical potential, would have broadened its horizons and sought to extend its influence on a global scale.<sup>10</sup>

Some observers, nevertheless, have attributed Soviet expansionist international behavior almost solely to a Marxist-Leninist drive for world domination. This school of thought asserts that the fundamental teachings of Marx and Lenin about the inevitable defeat of capitalism and the global triumph of socialism remain the key operative foreign policy goals of the Soviet leadership. According to such observers, the communist leaders of the USSR are thoroughly committed to a protracted life-or-death struggle for power and determined to expand their influence at every possible opportunity.

Regardless of whether one is inclined toward the traditional Russian great power interpretation or the ideological interpretation of Soviet motivations in the world, there is little doubt that the Soviet leadership today perceives the USSR as a major international actor with a right to be heard, if it chooses, on virtually any issue. Moreover, proud of its status as one of the world's two nuclear superpowers, the Soviet leadership is almost certain to believe that the Soviet Union should continue to play a leading role in world politics throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

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<sup>9</sup>See Ivo J. Lederer, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

<sup>10</sup>An especially prescient observation about Russia's power potential was made almost 150 years ago by Alexis de Tocqueville, who predicted that Russia and the United States were destined to be the world's dominant powers, with the Russian position resting primarily on its military capabilities.



## INTERDEPENDENCIES

As befits a superpower, the Soviet Union has an extensive series of treaty commitments. The most prominent of these is the multilateral Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance, and Cooperation signed in Warsaw on 14 May 1955. This alliance, commonly known as the Warsaw Pact, commits the Soviet Union and the communist regimes of Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania to the joint defense of their European territories. Originally conceived as a response to the rearmament of the Federal Republic of Germany and its admission into NATO, this treaty has become, over the years, a major policy instrument for the Soviets' domination of their communist client states in Eastern Europe.

Bilateral treaties of friendship and mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and each of the other member states reinforce the common defense commitments of the Warsaw Pact. The Soviets have also signed bilateral status of forces agreements with East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia that provide for the stationing of Soviet troops in these countries. Soviet military forces permanently deployed in Eastern Europe as of January 1989 included two tank divisions and tactical air formations in the Northern Group of Forces in Poland, five divisions (three motorized rifle and two tank) and a tactical air force in the Central Group of Forces in Czechoslovakia, four divisions (two motorized rifle and two tank) and a tactical air force in Hungary, and nineteen divisions (ten motorized rifle and nine tank) and a tactical air force in the Group of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG).<sup>11</sup>

Gorbachev has announced, however, extensive unilateral Soviet force reductions in Eastern Europe, including the withdrawal of six tank divisions from Eastern Europe—four from East Germany, one from Czechoslovakia, and one from Hungary—as well as the removal of 3300 other main battle tanks, 230 combat aircraft, and several air assault and assault river-crossing elements, to be completed by the end of 1990.

Several high-level military and political consultative bodies, all thoroughly dominated by the Soviet Union, are associated with the Warsaw Pact. The most important are the Political Consultative Committee (whose membership includes the Communist Party first secretaries, heads of governments, and defense and foreign ministers from each member state) and the Council of Defense Ministers. Both bodies convene, on average, twice a year. A Joint High Command, headquartered in Moscow, tops the military command structure of the Warsaw Pact. A senior Soviet officer, who serves as commander in chief of the Warsaw

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<sup>11</sup>International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1987-1988* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1987), p. 41.

Pact, heads the command. This post is currently occupied by General of the Army P. G. Lushev, who is also a Soviet first deputy minister of defense. The military command also includes a Soviet chief of staff (currently General of the Army V. N. Lobov), who traditionally serves simultaneously as a deputy chief of the Soviet General Staff. In addition, general officers from each member state represent their nation at the Warsaw Pact headquarters in Moscow.

The USSR also has close economic ties with the Eastern European communist states, as well as Cuba and Vietnam, through the Council for Economic Mutual Assistance, commonly abbreviated CEMA or COMECON. The Soviets have sought with only moderate success to use this mechanism to enforce a transnational economic division of labor among its members. Economic relations among these states over the years have been marked by a massive flow of resources from the Soviet Union to its clients through a variety of direct and indirect subsidies. Thus the Soviet "empire," like many other empires before it, is being maintained at very considerable expense for the hegemonic power.<sup>12</sup>

The Soviets have bilateral "friendship" treaties with several other states. The oldest is with the Mongolian People's Republic, which has been allied with the Soviet Union since the creation of this vassal state under direct Soviet sponsorship in 1921. Soviet military cooperation with the regime in Ulan Bator is currently governed by a treaty of friendship, cooperation, and mutual aid signed on January 16, 1966. This pact provides for the permanent stationing of several Soviet divisions in Mongolia.<sup>13</sup>

The Soviets have also signed treaties of friendship and cooperation with several Third World countries, including Egypt (May 1971), India (August 1971), Iraq (April 1972), Somalia (July 1974), Angola (October 1976), Mozambique (March 1977), Vietnam (November 1978), Ethiopia (November 1978), Afghanistan (December 1978), South Yemen (October 1979), Syria (October 1980), Congo (May 1981), and North Yemen (October 1984). Egypt terminated its treaty in March 1976 and Somalia its treaty in November 1977, after their relations with the Soviet Union had severely deteriorated.

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<sup>12</sup>Charles Wolf, Jr., et al., *The Costs of the Soviet Empire*, R-3073/1-NA (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, September 1983); David Albright, "On Eastern Europe: Security Implications for the USSR," *Parameters*, Summer 1984, p. 30.

<sup>13</sup>According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the number of Soviet divisions in Mongolia has varied over the years moving up from only two divisions in 1974 to five in 1982 and then back to four divisions in 1987. *The Military Balance, 1985-1986*, p. 29, and *The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, p. 44.

The 12 treaties of friendship and cooperation remaining in effect provide clear evidence of continuing Soviet involvement in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Most of these treaties contain provisions calling for military cooperation between the parties. All have been accompanied by varying degrees of Soviet military assistance, and, in some cases, the substantial presence of Soviet military personnel. This assistance has become essential to the Marxist-Leninist client regimes in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, which face armed challenges from active liberation movements that operate within their borders and receive materiel support from the West.

The friendship treaty with Afghanistan was invoked by the Soviets in December 1979 to justify their invasion, which toppled the Amin regime. It was cited as the legal basis to support the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan with over 115,000 troops until troop withdrawals began under a UN-sponsored agreement in spring 1988. The prospects for continuation of the friendship treaty with the communist government in Kabul appear dubious as the Soviets completed the withdrawal of their forces in February 1989, and the survival of the Najibullah regime seems problematical.

## II. NATIONAL OBJECTIVES, NATIONAL STRATEGY, MILITARY DOCTRINE

### NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES

The most fundamental security objectives of the Soviet leaders are the defense of the communist regime and the territorial integrity of the USSR. The bitter experience of the Nazi invasion during World War II and the deep-seated patriotism of the Russian people provide a solid basis for a shared commitment between the Communist Party leadership and the Soviet people regarding the primacy of defense considerations.

The Soviet near-obsession with defense has provided a powerful impetus for the accumulation of military power and for the steady expansion of Soviet political and military control beyond the nation's political frontiers. Motivated by what some observers have called a quest for "absolute security," the Soviets have, for over 50 years, accorded the highest investment priority to defense. In addition, they have sought to establish and enlarge a territorial buffer, particularly in Europe, between themselves and their prospective enemies.

### Creation of Territorial Buffer

The Soviet Union occupies a central geographic position, straddling the continents of Europe and Asia. Spanning approximately 170 degrees of longitude, the USSR directly borders on 12 other states and looks out across enclosed seas at an additional seven. Thus, Soviet interests and concerns range from the Scandinavian neighbors of Norway and Finland in the northwest, through the communist client regimes of Eastern Europe, on to Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan in the Near East, to Pakistan and India in South Asia, and China, North Korea, and Japan in the Far East.

The majority of these borders are marked by no significant geographical barriers, thus contributing to the historical perceptions and reality of Russian vulnerability to overland invasion. From this critical "heartland" location, the leaders in the Kremlin, like their czarist predecessors, confront a multitude of challenges and opportunities along this lengthy frontier.

The quest for a *cordon sanitaire* lay behind the Soviet establishment of its first communist satellite regime in Outer Mongolia in 1921 and the Soviet absorption of the Baltic states and eastern portions of Poland, Finland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania in 1939-1945. It also lay behind the subsequent westward extension of this buffer zone through

the forcible imposition of communist regimes in Eastern Europe as the Red Army advanced at the end of World War II.

The retention of subservient communist governments throughout Eastern Europe has remained a high-priority Soviet security objective throughout the postwar period. This unrelenting Soviet determination has been visibly demonstrated in the Soviet Army's brutal suppression of would-be defector regimes in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and its heavy coercive pressure on a restive Poland in 1980-1981 that ultimately precipitated General Jaruzelski's military takeover. The Soviets demonstrated a similar willingness to employ armed force to maintain a "friendly" communist regime in power in neighboring Asian states when they invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

The invasion of Afghanistan represented an apparent application of the so-called Brezhnev doctrine, which justifies Soviet armed intervention to defend allied "socialist" regimes endangered by "counterrevolution."<sup>1</sup> Its application beyond the previous bounds of Eastern Europe initially raised Western concerns that the Soviets might prove willing to expend considerable military effort to preserve other "socialist" Third World governments that have allied themselves directly with the Soviet Union.

The subsequent failure of this intervention in Afghanistan to suppress the resistance, the Soviets' ultimate decision to withdraw, leaving their client regime exposed to escalating military pressure, and the public recriminations in the Soviet media about the decisions to intervene militarily in the first place in Afghanistan and earlier in Eastern Europe have alleviated many of these Western concerns. In the wake of these events and new Soviet declarations about the rights of the Eastern European states to determine their own destinies, Soviet spokesmen have said that the government is reviewing the Brezhnev doctrine.

Soviet national security objectives are not confined to these broadly construed "defensive" concerns. As noted earlier, Russian great power and Marxist-Leninist drives have combined to underwrite a strong impulse to expand Soviet influence in areas adjacent to the USSR and throughout the world. Soviet leaders, like their Russian predecessors, have evinced consistent interest in increasing their influence in Western Europe, the Middle East, and the energy-rich Persian Gulf.

Moreover, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Soviet political and military spokesmen increasingly spoke about and used military power as a primary instrument for the promotion

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<sup>1</sup>The so-called Brezhnev doctrine justifying Soviet intervention in the "defense" of socialism first appeared in a *Pravda* editorial on September 26, 1968, a month after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It was repeated by General Secretary Brezhnev at the Polish Party Congress in Warsaw on November 12, 1968.

of their state interests.<sup>2</sup> As noted earlier, second thoughts about alleged Soviet overreliance on the military element of their foreign policy have emerged during the Gorbachev period.

### **Achievement of Military Superiority**

The Soviets are intensely concerned about their relative position in the international arena. They regularly assess their overall position in the world in terms of what they call the correlation of forces (*sootnosheniye sil*). In Soviet usage, this correlation refers to the overall balance of economic, military, scientific, and sociopolitical capabilities between two competing states or coalitions of states. Soviet analysts frequently calculate the correlation of forces both between themselves and their leading rival, the United States, and between the socialist and capitalist camps.

The Soviets long tended to write optimistically of the long-term trends in the global correlation of forces between socialism and capitalism. This optimism reflected the basic tenet of Marxism-Leninism that socialism/communism will inevitably triumph over the capitalist order. From the close of World War II until the early 1980s, the Soviets consistently claimed that the correlation of forces was shifting inexorably in favor of the socialist states led by the Soviet Union.

In recent years, however, favorable assessments of the correlation have appeared much less frequently, as the optimistic appraisal has given way to more sober private Soviet evaluations of the overall balance during the 1980s. These gloomier judgments likely reflect the combination of a badly lagging Soviet economy, the rise of a more pragmatic and dynamic post-Mao China, a fundamental reassessment of Soviet prospects in the Third World, and the emergence of a resurgent, more confident and activist United States on the world scene.

Today, the Soviet leaders are undoubtedly determined to seek to maintain their status as one of the world's two military and political superpowers. They appear seriously concerned, however, about their long-term ability to do so.

Soviet military experts frequently analyze the narrower military balance, which they describe as the "correlation of military forces and means," between themselves and their prospective enemies.<sup>3</sup> Discussions in this regard range from simple quantitative

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<sup>2</sup>The most outspoken military figure in this regard was the commander in chief of the Navy, Fleet Admiral of the Soviet Union S. G. Gorshkov. From 1965 until his retirement in 1985, he regularly touted the Navy's ability to serve Soviet foreign policy; for example, he asserted that "the Navy is, to the greatest degree, capable of operationally supporting the state's interest beyond its borders." See Gorshkov, *Morskaya moshch' gosudarstva* (Sea Power of the State), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), p. v.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen Jones, "The Correlation of Forces in Soviet Decision-Making," paper delivered to the 1978 Biennial Conference, Section on Military Studies, International Studies Association, Washington, D.C., November 1978.

comparisons of the East-West balance of strategic nuclear or general purpose forces to sophisticated dynamic analyses of relative military capabilities in various scenarios, often using complex mathematical force-effectiveness calculations.<sup>4</sup>

Soviet declarations regarding the state of the military balance and Soviet objectives in the military competition with the West have varied considerably. For several decades, dating as far back as declarations accompanying their early five-year economic and defense plans of the 1930s, the Soviets openly declared their intention to acquire military superiority over their prospective enemies.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Soviet political and military figures often asserted that Soviet military capabilities in fact exceeded those of the West. The most prominent example of such claims was the series of outspoken assertions by Party First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev in the late 1950s that the Soviet Union was superior to the United States in strategic missile strength.

These Soviet boasts, made against the backdrop of dramatic *sputnik* satellite launches, helped spur the United States into determined efforts to overcome what was later revealed to have been an illusory "missile gap."<sup>5</sup> The fact that the resultant surge of U.S. strategic missile deployments placed the Soviets in a distinctly inferior position throughout the 1960s may help to explain the Soviet avoidance of such bold claims of military advantage since that time.

The Soviets have exhibited increased circumspection in public declarations regarding their goals in the East-West arms competition for more than a decade. Military figures wrote openly in the 1960s and on into the mid-1970s of the need to attain military-technological superiority over their adversaries.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, Soviet claims of such superiority tapered off significantly in the early 1970s and have virtually disappeared from Soviet public discourse since the latter half of the 1970s.

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<sup>4</sup>For example, Maj. Gen. I. Anureyev, "Determining the Correlation of Forces in Terms of Nuclear Weapons," *Voennaia mysl'* (Military Thought), no. 6, 1967, pp. 35-45. For a Western commentary on this Soviet approach to the analysis of the strategic nuclear balance, see Stephen M. Meyer and Peter Almquist, *Insights from Mathematical Modelling in Soviet Mission Analysis*, DARPA Report, April 1985.

<sup>5</sup>See Arnold L. Horelick and Myron Rush, *Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

<sup>6</sup>See, for example, Lt. Col. V. M. Bondarenko, "Military Technological Superiority: The Most Important Factor in the Reliable Defense of the Country," *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil* (Communist of the Armed Forces), no. 17, September 1966, pp. 7-14; and *Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia* (Soviet Military Encyclopedia, hereafter cited as *SME*), vol. 2 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), p. 253.

In fact, Soviet claims of superiority ended just when the unrelenting momentum of Soviet arms programs was leading many Western observers to argue that the Soviet Union was, in fact, embarked on a drive to attain clear-cut military superiority. Instead, beginning with Brezhnev's pivotal address in Tula in January 1977, the Soviets have sought to rebut these Western charges, asserting that the Soviet Union seeks nothing more than military parity with the West and that Soviet military doctrine has a strictly "defensive" orientation.<sup>7</sup>

Gorbachev's "new political thinking" in foreign and defense policy has brought a new spate of Soviet assertions in the late 1980s that the Soviets seek no more than parity in the various military balances with the West. Whatever their public declarations, the combination of military doctrinal incentive, residual siege mentality, and their likely convictions regarding the political utility of military power are such that the Soviet leaders almost certainly will continue to seek to acquire substantial military advantage over their capitalist foes, should that appear attainable.

#### **Maintenance of Domestic Order**

The Soviet Armed Forces contribute importantly to the fulfillment of the regime's internal objectives as well. The military forces of the Ministry of Defense have infrequently been involved in the maintenance of domestic order. Over the past 25 years, their activity in this regard has been limited to occasional use in extraordinary circumstances. These have included reported military involvement in suppressing striking workers in Novocherkassk in 1962, in the quelling of rioters protesting food shortages in Rostov in 1963, and most recently, in controlling the violence and policing massive nationalist protests in the Armenian and the Azerbaijan republics that have resulted from the controversy over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and in brutally attacking Georgian nationalist demonstrators in Tbilisi in April 1989.<sup>8</sup>

The regular troops of the Ministry of Defense may well be called upon more frequently for this type of action in the years ahead, since Gorbachev policies are significantly raising national expectations that the system will have great difficulties in

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<sup>7</sup>In *Pravda*, January 19, 1977. Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, former chief of the General Staff, lent the authority of the professional military to these claims in various public statements and his authoritative article, "Military Strategy," in *SME*, vol. 7 (1979), p. 563.

<sup>8</sup>See Timothy Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 251, on the Novocherkassk strikes, and Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979), p. 176, on the Rostov riots.



fulfilling. The prime responsibility for the maintenance of public order rests with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and the Committee of State Security (KGB), both of which have sizable forces organized in regular military formations available for such contingencies. (Interestingly, the Soviets consider these internal security troops an element of the Soviet Armed Forces.) Nevertheless, the professional military remains a weapon of likely resort if the threat of disorder is particularly acute.

### Political Indoctrination

A less dramatic but nevertheless significant domestic political role played by the Soviet military establishment occurs in the area of political socialization. Some two million young men are inducted into the Soviet Armed Forces annually for terms of service of one and one-half to three years.<sup>9</sup> Their experiences in the armed forces represents the final phase of a sustained, party-controlled political indoctrination campaign, begun in the nursery schools and elementary schools, designed to develop properly oriented "new Soviet men."

During their stints in the military, the Main Political Administration (MPA) of the Soviet Army and Navy subjects these young men to an intensive indoctrination.<sup>10</sup> A combination of compulsory attendance at five hours of weekly political instruction conducted by MPA political officers and mandatory participation in the activities of the Young Communist League (Komsomol) represent the Soviets' determined effort to inculcate the desired domestic and foreign policy perspectives.

Despite these efforts, senior Soviet commanders and commissars are greatly concerned about the attitudes of Soviet youth. As the memory of World War II gradually fades from the collective consciousness, Soviet youth are becoming, in the words of Colonel General Dmitrii Volkogonov, a former deputy chief of the Main Political Administration, "vegetarian pacifists" with little interest in the "martial traditions and heroic accomplishments" of the Soviet Armed Forces.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>For most Soviet draftees, the period of compulsory military service is two years. However, this term is three years for certain naval components, while most deferred students who have received institute or university degrees serve for a year and a half or less. Scott and Scott, *Armed Forces of the USSR*, p. 305.

<sup>10</sup>The organization and activities of the Main Political Administration are discussed below.

<sup>11</sup>D. A. Volkogonov in *XXVII s"yezd KPSS i zadachi kafedr obshchestvennykh nauk: Materialy Vsesoyuznogo soveshchaniya zaveduyushchikh kafedrami obshchestvennykh nauk vysshykh uchebnykh zavedeniy* (The 27th CPSU congress and tasks of the social sciences departments: Materials of an all-union conference of heads of social sciences departments in higher educational institutions), (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1987), p. 129.

The Soviet Armed Forces also contribute in various ways to the functioning of the Soviet economy. Soviet Army personnel stationed in agricultural regions of the USSR are regularly called upon to aid in bringing in the harvest. In addition, contingents of the 400,000-person Construction Troops, although predominantly involved in the construction of defense-related facilities, are also employed to build civilian projects, such as Moscow State University, Sheremet'ev Airport, and multistory apartment buildings in Moscow.<sup>12</sup> Both the Construction Troops and the Ministry of Defense's Railroad Troops have helped build the Soviet showcase construction project of the late 1970s and 1980s, the new railroad line, called the Baikal-Amur *Magistral* (BAM), which runs parallel to the legendary Trans-Siberian Railroad through Siberia and the Far East to the Pacific.

### **NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

Despite the Soviet penchant for authoritative programmatic statements and the voluminous output of their sizable communities of political commentators, civilian academics, and professional military theoreticians, no publicly available document or group of documents sets forth the Soviet strategy for pursuing its national security objectives. Even within the inner councils of the Kremlin, probably no such document exists. Nevertheless, on the basis of the statements of Soviet political and military spokesmen and the many defense-related activities of the Soviet government, it is possible to piece together what appears to be the broad guidelines of the Soviet national security strategy.

### **Strategic Deterrence and Reasonable Sufficiency**

The central element of the Soviet national security strategy is quite straightforward: The Soviets have relentlessly improved their large and diverse military forces and then used them to protect and advance their interests on the world scene. First and foremost, the Soviet leaders rely on their massive military power to deter attack on the Soviet Union itself and on their allies and friends. They accomplish this by maintaining a full spectrum of strategic nuclear and general purpose forces.

The Soviets assign the highest priority to the deterrence of nuclear attack. The leaders in the Kremlin clearly recognize the catastrophic damage that would accompany a global nuclear conflict and are determined to avoid the nuclear devastation of the Soviet Union. Over the past three decades, Soviet spokesmen have repeatedly made deterrent threats, directed primarily at the United States and its NATO allies.

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<sup>12</sup>A. I. Romashko, *Voennye stroiteli na stroikakh Moskvy* (Military Builders in the Building of Moscow), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1972).

In recent years, Mikhail Gorbachev and other Soviet spokesmen have frequently asserted that nuclear deterrence is in the long run inherently unstable and dangerous. Thus, they have argued, it should be phased out through a process of nuclear disarmament as soon as circumstances permit. Despite this rhetorical shift, the Soviet approach to deterrence has traditionally had a decidedly martial tone. Soviet military and political figures have consistently warned that any state that dares to attack the Soviet Union or its allies will receive a "crushing rebuff" and suffer certain military defeat.

Developments in the 1980s, in particular the "new political thinking" of the Gorbachev period, has brought dramatic changes in Soviet discussions of deterrence. Soviet spokesmen, led by Gorbachev, claim that their objectives in both the strategic nuclear and theater conventional areas is to field forces that are "reasonably sufficient" to provide a reliable defense. With regard to strategic nuclear forces, Soviet civilian and military commentators alike have stated that reasonable sufficiency—or "sufficiency for defense," as the military prefers to call it—would allow deep cuts in the central strategic nuclear arsenals of the superpowers while maintaining rough numerical parity.

Soviet commentators have also described reasonable sufficiency in terms of preserving the existing state of strategic stability, or what one Soviet civilian specialist has called the condition of "qualitative parity" between the superpowers.<sup>13</sup> They define strategic stability as the prevailing situation, in which both the Soviet Union and the United States have the capability to inflict unacceptable damage in retaliation against the other, even under worst-case circumstances (that is, after the other has launched a surprise, would-be-disarming first strike).<sup>14</sup>

This approach to stability and deterrence represents a direct Soviet appropriation of the mutual assured destruction (MAD) concept underlying American deterrence theory during the 1950s and 1960s and long associated with one of its most forceful advocates,

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<sup>13</sup>Conversation in Washington, D.C., with A. V. Kortunov of the Institute for the Study of the United States and Canada (IUSAC), January 1988.

<sup>14</sup>The growing Soviet literature on strategic stability includes: A. G. Arbatov, A. A. Vasil'yev, and A. A. Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability," *SShA: Ekonomika, politika, ideologiya* (USA: Economics, Politics, Ideology), no. 9, September 1987, pp. 3-13, and no. 10, October 1987, pp. 17-24; A. Arbatov and A. Savel'yev, "The Control and Communications System as a Factor of Strategic Stability," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniia* (The World Economy and International Relations, abbreviated *MEMO*), no. 12, December 1987, pp. 12-23; A. Kokoshin, "From the Standpoint of New Thinking: Three Major Elements in Stability," *Krasnaya zvezda* (KZ), September 16, 1988.

former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. In fact, Marshal Ogarkov attributed the "unacceptable damage" idea to McNamara when he (Ogarkov) first publicly endorsed the concept of a mutual retaliatory stalemate in 1983.

Soviet civilian specialists analyzing strategic nuclear exchange have even adopted the McNamara-Enthoven standard of 400 equivalent megatons (EMT) as the amount of destructive power required in one's surviving retaliatory forces to inflict unacceptable damage on the adversary. According to one recent Soviet article, this damage threshold would involve successful attacks with 400 one-megaton weapons on approximately 200 selected urban centers—attacks that would destroy 25 to 30 percent of the population and up to 70 percent of the industrial capacity of the adversary.<sup>15</sup>

Soviet analysts at the Institute for the Study of the United States and Canada (IUSAC) and the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) have reportedly begun calculating a side's second-strike retaliatory potential in terms of multiples of this 400 EMT value, which they call "McNamaras."<sup>16</sup> A pioneering study produced by a committee of Soviet civilian academics claims that a force of only 400 single-warhead mobile, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) could inflict a McNamara's worth of retaliatory damage. Consequently, it recommends that this force structure be the long-term objective for both the superpowers in the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).<sup>17</sup>

Most Soviet commentators have asserted that a "reasonably sufficient" Soviet strategic force posture would need to be both roughly equal in size to that of the United States and capable of inflicting unacceptable retaliatory damage. Some Soviet civilian analysts have gone beyond this, suggesting that as long as the Soviet Union had a secure second-strike capability that could inflict unacceptable damage, it would not have to be concerned about maintaining approximate numerical parity with the strategic nuclear forces of the United States.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Arbatov, Vasil'yev, and Kokoshin, "Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Stability," *SShA: Ekonomika, politika, ideologiya*, no. 9, 1987, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>Conversations with A. G. Savel'yev of the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) and A. A. Vasil'yev of IUSAC, February and May 1988.

<sup>17</sup>R. Sagdeyev, A. Kokoshin, et al., *Strategic Stability Under the Conditions of Radical Nuclear Arms Reductions*, Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat, Moscow, April 1987.

<sup>18</sup>I. Malashenko, "Parity Reassessed," *New Times*, no. 47/87, November 1987, pp. 9-10; A. V. Kortunov, conversation with the author, Washington, D.C., January 1988.

This approach ties in with the ideas set forth in a series of articles by a trio of authors from IUSAC.<sup>19</sup> These authors have suggested that the Soviet Union can adequately provide for its security by undertaking asymmetrical responses to U.S. arms programs—responses that are smaller and less expensive than the initial U.S. force deployments.

The IUSAC authors maintain that U.S. arms initiatives like the massive bomber buildup of the 1950s and the prospective strategic defense initiative (SDI) deployment were deliberately designed to severely overstrain the Soviet economy as part of a strategy of "economic exhaustion."<sup>20</sup> They also argue that the Soviet Union would be well advised to seriously consider making unilateral reductions in its military forces on the path to "sufficient" forces rather than waiting for negotiated reductions.

Unsurprisingly, senior Soviet military figures have consistently rejected the idea that the Soviet Union should settle for numerically inferior strategic forces. Military spokesmen have insisted instead that any reductions in strategic nuclear force levels must be mutual and roughly equal, thus preserving the rough military-strategic parity that currently exists in the U.S.-Soviet central strategic balance.<sup>21</sup>

The military are apparently prepared, however, to support policies providing for deep and equitable cuts that preserve both quantitative parity and the existing retaliatory deterrent stalemate. The military leadership appears to have reached this conclusion by the early 1980s, when Marshal Ogarkov repeatedly condemned the continuing buildups of the U.S. and Soviet strategic arsenals and positively characterized the U.S.-Soviet strategic nuclear balance, as noted earlier, as one in which each side had retaliatory forces with the unquestioned ability to survive a first strike and then launch a crushing retaliatory strike to

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<sup>19</sup>V. V. Zhurkin, S. A. Karaganov, and A. V. Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency—Or How to Break the Vicious Circle," *New Times*, no. 40/87, 12 October 1987, pp. 13-15; "On Reasonable Sufficiency," *SShA: Ekonomika, politika, ideologiya*, no. 12, December 1987, pp. 11-21; "Concepts of Security—Old and New," *Kommunist*, no. 1, January 1988, pp. 42-50. Zhurkin and Karaganov transferred to the newly formed Institute for the Study of Europe, which Zhurkin heads.

<sup>20</sup>A. G. Arbatov echoes this concern about an American "competitive strategy" designed to overstress the Soviet economy in "On Parity and Reasonable Sufficiency," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* (International Life), no. 9, September 1988, pp. 80-92.

<sup>21</sup>See Marshal S. L. Sokolov, "In Defense of Peace and the Security of the Motherland," *Pravda*, February 23, 1987; Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, "The Glory and Pride of the Soviet People," *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, February 21, 1987; Army Gen D. T. Yazov, "The Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact, A Doctrine of the Defense of Peace and Socialism," *Pravda*, July 27, 1987.

inflict unacceptable damage on the other.<sup>22</sup> Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev appears to share Ogarkov's views on these matters.<sup>23</sup>

### **Victory-Oriented Approach versus Nonoffensive Doctrine**

Despite these dramatic changes in the Soviets' declaratory policy concerning their objectives with regard to the overall size of their strategic nuclear forces, Soviet operational doctrine for the employment of their large and highly capable strategic arsenal almost certainly continues to call for successful warfighting. It apparently commits the Soviet Armed Forces, should war occur, to carry out a combination of offensive and defensive operations designed to do the best they can to allow the Soviet Union to survive and prevail in a global nuclear war.

Moreover, Soviet force deployments—from the fielding of large numbers of accurate ICBM weapons, which are increasingly capable of supporting effective "counterforce" strikes against U.S. silo-based ICBMs, to the steady upgrading of their vast array of active and passive defenses, which are designed to limit damage to the Soviet homeland—tie in with these victory-oriented objectives. The Soviets would also employ these forces to carry out extensive strikes against key industrial and political centers throughout an enemy's homeland with the stated objectives of destroying his war effort industries, disrupting his general economic infrastructure, crippling his political-administrative apparatus, and breaking his will to resist.

The Soviets showed little inclination to restrain their strategic programs in the interest of maintaining a stable U.S.-Soviet nuclear deterrent standoff based on mutual societal vulnerability during the 1970s. They have been much more willing to agree to restraints and even substantial reductions in their long-range nuclear strike systems over the past few years, as evidenced in their willingness to accept heavy cuts in their ICBM and sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) forces in the as yet uncompleted START agreement.

The Soviets continue, however, to expand and modernize their large and highly capable strategic attack forces. Nevertheless, Moscow is nowhere near attaining a position of superiority in the central strategic nuclear balance or a strategic capability that could deny the United States the ability to inflict devastating retaliation against the Soviet homeland, and has little prospect of doing so.

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<sup>22</sup>See Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, *Izvestiya*, September 23, 1983, and "The Defense of Socialism: Experience of History and the Present Day," *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 9, 1984.

<sup>23</sup>See Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, "The Great Victory," *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 9, 1987.

The threat to devastate any aggressor in a general nuclear war remains the cornerstone of Soviet deterrent policy. It is complemented by a clear determination to acquire as well the capabilities to fight and win major nonnuclear conflicts in theaters of military operations (TVDs) along the periphery of the Soviet Union. The combination of a well-developed combined-arms force employment doctrine and a panoply of impressive military capabilities supports Soviet preparations to fight successfully in such theater conflicts.

Here, too, discussions in Moscow about "reasonable sufficiency" since 1987 have broken new ground. Soviet spokesmen have also applied the reasonable sufficiency criterion to theater conventional forces, with particular reference to the NATO-Warsaw Pact balance in Europe. They have muddled these discussions, however, by a simultaneous campaign to characterize their military doctrine and that of their Warsaw Pact allies as "fundamentally defensive."

Initial formulations of reasonable sufficiency in theater warfare simply equated sufficiency with the current Soviet/Warsaw Pact force posture, which they described as adequate "to repulse aggression" and "to reliably ensure the collective defense of the socialist community."<sup>24</sup> Over time, however, the emphasis regarding reasonable sufficiency in the theater has shifted from the present to the future.

The Soviets apparently want to reconfigure the military forces of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact so as to preclude a successful surprise attack by either side and ultimately to rule out the mounting of offensive operations altogether. This objective has been described as a cooperative transition to a "nonoffensive" or "defensive" posture, phrases that the Soviets have borrowed from Western European peace and disarmament circles.

Military and civilian spokesmen alike have embraced these utopian objectives, despite the fact that they directly contravene the long-standing offensive tradition in Soviet military-technical doctrine, described below. More significantly, the pursuit of these objectives would require the scrapping of the conceptual and organizational innovations introduced over the past decade—innovations designed precisely to support a theater strategic offensive operation fought with conventional weapons in theaters around the USSR.

When pressed for details regarding what a "reasonably sufficient" posture in Central Europe might look like, Soviet civilian analysts have readily admitted that they are in the very earliest stages of exploring this concept. The Soviet civilians who advocate the concept

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<sup>24</sup>Army Gen D. T. Yazov, *Pravda*, July 27, 1987.

of reasonable sufficiency are seeking to develop a stability concept that can be applied to conventional force balances in ways similar to the "unacceptable damage" threshold that they are using to define strategic stability in the U.S.-Soviet nuclear balance.

In parallel with their discussions of reasonable sufficiency, the Soviets have embarked on a concerted effort to convince the world of the fundamentally "defensive" character of both Soviet and Warsaw Pact military doctrine. Following a meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee in Berlin in May 1987, Pact leaders declared that "the military doctrine of the Warsaw Pact member states is strictly a defensive one."<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, according to Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, then chief of the General Staff, and Colonel General M. A. Gareyev, his deputy responsible for military doctrine, both the Pact's military-technical doctrine and the structure of Soviet forces, including their doctrinal manuals and training, had already begun to reflect a defensive orientation.<sup>26</sup> The Soviets also insist that their military doctrine is now uniquely directed toward the prevention, rather than the conduct, of war.<sup>27</sup>

While the Soviet military leaders praise the "new defensive doctrine," they have also registered a significant reservation. Several senior Soviet military commanders have pointed out that the defensive orientation of Soviet/Pact doctrine does not rule out counteroffensive operations against an aggressor. Thus, Army General A. I. Gribkov, then Chief of the Staff of the Joint Forces of the Warsaw Pact, said in September 1987:

In the event of an attack, the armed forces of the Warsaw Pact countries will operate with exceptional resolve. While repulsing aggression, they will also conduct counteroffensive operations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"On the Military Doctrine of the Warsaw Pact Member States," *Pravda*, May 31, 1987.

<sup>26</sup>Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, "The Doctrine of Preventing War, Defending Peace and Socialism," *Problemy mira i sotsializma* (Problems of Peace and Socialism), no. 12, December 1987, p. 26; Col Gen M. A. Gareyev, "Prevention of War," *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 23, 1987.

<sup>27</sup>See, for example, Col Gen M. A. Gareyev, *Sovetskaya voyennaya nauka* (Soviet Military Science), (Moscow: Znaniye, November 1987), p. 8; Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, "Watching over Peace and Security," *Trud*, February 21, 1988; Army Gen P. Lushev, "In Defense of the Achievements of the Revolution," *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, no. 8, August 1987, p. 68; "Military Doctrine" and "Military Strategy," in Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev et al., eds., *Voyennyi entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'* (Military Encyclopedic Dictionary), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986), pp. 240, 714.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Army Gen A. I. Gribkov, "Doctrine of Maintaining Peace," *Krasnaya zvezda*, September 29, 1987.



Army General D. T. Yazov, the Minister of Defense, echoed this sentiment in October 1987, noting that

It is impossible to rout an aggressor with defense alone.... After an attack has been repelled, the troops and naval forces must be able to conduct a *decisive offensive* [emphasis in original]. The switch to an offensive will be in the form of a counteroffensive.<sup>29</sup>

This critical caveat that offensive operations are fully consistent with a defensive doctrine allows the Soviet military to continue to develop offensive concepts and capabilities along with their own "defensive" doctrine.

Senior Soviet commanders also engaged in a pointed public dialogue with civilian analysts (and possibly a more discreet debate with top political leaders) regarding how the Soviet Union should reduce and restructure its theater forces to meet the "sufficiency" objective. Specifically, throughout most of 1988 senior military spokesmen vehemently rejected the suggestion of civilian experts that the Soviet Union consider substantially cutting its overall troop strength unilaterally, as Nikita Khrushchev had done in the late 1950s, rather than waiting to negotiate mutual force reductions with the West.<sup>30</sup>

In December 1987, Marshal Akhromeyev rejected this approach in general terms.<sup>31</sup> Two months later, Army General Ivan Tretyak, the commander in chief of the Air Defense Forces, directly challenged the validity of the civilians' prime example of a unilateral force reduction that allegedly benefited Soviet security. He described Khrushchev's troop reduction in the late 1950s as a "sorry experience...a rash step [that] dealt a colossal blow to our defense capacity," and urged that "any changes in our army should be considered a thousand times over before they are decided upon."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Army Gen D. T. Yazov, *Na strazhe sotsializma i mira* (On Guard Over Socialism and Peace), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1987), p. 34.

<sup>30</sup>Zhurkin, Karaganov, and Kortunov, "Reasonable Sufficiency—Or How to Break the Vicious Circle," *New Times*, no. 40/87, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup>Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, *Problemy mira i sotsializma*, no. 12, December 1987, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup>Interview with Gen Ivan Tretyak, "Reliable Defense First and Foremost," *Moscow News*, no. 8, February 21, 1988, p. 12.

Yet in December 1988, as noted earlier, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union intends to reduce its military manpower unilaterally by 500,000 men and to cut 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery pieces, and 800 combat aircraft from its forces deployed in Europe over a two-year period. Moreover, in February 1989, Gorbachev said that the Soviet Union plans to cut its overall defense spending by 14.2 percent and its weapons-procurement funding by 19.2 percent over the same period. Thus, despite serious military misgivings, Gorbachev has clearly embarked on an effort to reduce the defense burden significantly.

In winter 1988-1989, a new debate on defense matters emerged in the Soviet media. A variety of military and civilian commentators discussed the pros and cons of radically reorganizing the Soviet Armed Forces. Senior military leaders, including Defense Minister Yazov and the newly appointed chief of the General Staff, Army General M. A. Moiseyev, vigorously rejected suggestions that Soviet forces be converted to a mixed structure consisting of a small professional army and a large territorial militia or to an all-volunteer force.<sup>33</sup> The high-level participation in the debate suggests that these changes are being seriously considered.

### Multitheater Defense

Throughout their history, the Soviets have confronted a serious "two-front" security challenge in the form of hostile, militarily significant adversaries on their extended European and Far Eastern borders. Consequently, the Soviets have long adhered to a "two-war" policy in the sense that they have sought to maintain sufficient forces in both theaters with the capability, at a minimum, to defend these areas independently. During the 1980s, in the wake of the Islamic revolution in Iran, they have added apparent preparations for war in a third theater, Southwest Asia, that is, south through Iran to the Persian Gulf.

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<sup>33</sup>See Stephen Foye, "Debate Continues on the Fundamental Restructuring of the Soviet Armed Forces," Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR, RL 172/89, April 7, 1989, pp. 12-16; "Akhromeyev on U.S. Threat, Army Restructuring," Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS-SOV-89-011, January 18, 1989, pp. 87-92 (*Sovetskaya Rossiya*, January 14, 1989, pp. 1, 3); "General Moiseyev Cautious on Force Cuts," FBIS-SOV-89-028, pp. 77-82 (*Krasnaya zvezda*, February 10, 1989, pp. 1-2; *Vremya* newscast, February 12, 1989); "Moiseyev Evaluates Military on Army-Navy Day," FBIS-SOV-89-035, February 23, 1989, pp. 101-104 (*Krasnaya zvezda*, February 23, 1989, p. 2); "Yazov Addresses Newsmen on Restructuring," FBIS-SOV-89-043, March 7, 1989, pp. 103-105 (*Krasnaya zvezda*, March 7, 1989, p. 2, and March 4, p. 3); "Military's Place in Soviet Society Considered," Joint Publications Research Service, JPRS-UMA-89-001, January 11, 1989, pp. 9-15 (*XX Century and Peace*, No. 9, 1988, pp. 18-28).

This "multicontingency approach," in the language of American defense policy planning, became increasingly evident after the severe deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the early 1960s. Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, Soviet forces facing China in the Far East and Central Asia more than tripled in strength. Soviet forces have expanded modestly since that time and have been steadily modernized despite gradual improvement of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1980s.<sup>34</sup> These forces also threaten U.S., as well as Japanese and other Asian, forces in the Far East.

As the earlier buildup in the Far East was occurring, Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe and the western USSR were also being significantly expanded and upgraded. Preparations for a possible military campaign out of the Transcaucasus and Central Asia into Iran since the fall of the shah in 1979 have included the establishment of a new peacetime high command for the Southern Theater of Military Operations in 1984 but not a significant expansion of the forces opposite that theater other than the some 110,000 troops who were involved in the unsuccessful attempt to defeat the *mujaheddin* in Afghanistan between 1980 and February 1989.

During the 1970s, the Soviets dramatically improved their capabilities to project forces by air and sea far beyond the traditional reach of the Soviet Army in areas adjacent to Soviet territory. In this same period, Soviet military writers increasingly touted the role of the Soviet Armed Forces in advancing Soviet foreign policy interests throughout the world. During the 1980s, the growth of these force projection capabilities has slowed and the military advocacy of such operations has waned.

Nevertheless, the cumulative growth of Soviet capabilities and a continuing military interest in the study of "local wars" suggest the emergence of a new, lesser contingency objective in Soviet national security strategy. The main potential for the employment of Soviet military forces in the Third World appears to be focused on the Middle East, with the further possibility of the longer-range projection of Soviet military power into Africa or Southeast Asia.

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<sup>34</sup>The defense minister, Army Gen D. T. Yazov, claimed that the Soviets had begun to thin out its forces facing China in January 1988 but Western intelligence sources have failed to confirm that any significant reductions have taken place.

### **Arms Control**

Soviet national security strategy also includes the use of arms control negotiations and military assistance programs to support the achievement of Soviet foreign policy goals. The Soviets have participated in virtually all important international arms control negotiations since the close of World War II. A major objective of this participation has been their determination to gain widespread recognition as one of the world's two leading superpowers. They have also used these negotiations to seek to sow discord among the Western nations and to support their claims of international peace-loving intent.

The Soviet pursuit of what they call "military detente," which has meant the pursuit of arms control agreements with the West, has been a central element in their broader policy of promoting political accommodation and cooperation with the West. This policy and the more general political detente approach of which it is an important part served in the 1970s and appears intended to serve once again in the late 1980s as a means to gain access to Western technology and capital.

Soviet arms control efforts have also been designed to foster mutual East-West commitments to avoid nuclear conflict. Despite the clearly stated war-winning objectives of their operational military doctrine, Soviet military and political leaders have repeatedly acknowledged the catastrophic consequences of general nuclear war, and they will certainly seek to avoid it. Talks on limiting and reducing nuclear forces and on creating crisis management tools, such as the improved "hot line" between Moscow and Washington, are designed to assist in avoiding a nuclear war and to provide some basis for controlling such a war should it occur.

The Soviets also seek to use arms control negotiations and agreements to constrain the most threatening military activities of their adversaries while maintaining maximum flexibility for themselves. Arms control efforts in pursuit of these objectives, which are described in greater detail in Sec. V, below, are likely to remain a fundamental element of the Soviet national security strategy.

### **Military Aid to Third World**

For nearly 70 years, the Soviets have used military assistance programs to aid Marxist-Leninist factions struggling to gain power and to support friendly regimes in power fighting internal opposition or international foes. These programs have frequently proven useful as a means to gain political influence in the recipient nation and, in many cases, to maneuver the recipient into a position of dependence on the Soviet Union for economic support or for maintenance and logistic support of the military equipment provided.

Since the mid-1950s, the Soviets have had considerable experience in this area. Major infusions of military assistance have by no means guaranteed success for the Soviets in their dealings with Third World countries. Despite extensive Soviet military aid programs over several years, the Soviets suffered major setbacks in their dealings with Indonesia in the mid-1960s and Egypt in the early 1970s. Nevertheless, the Soviets clearly intend to continue to use this instrument to defend beleaguered Marxist-Leninist client states, to strengthen the ties of these client states with Moscow, and to seek to move other countries into the Soviet sphere of influence.

The Soviet Union's military assistance programs complement its gradually expanding capabilities for long-range power projection activities, discussed earlier. Arms aid has frequently facilitated initial Soviet acquisition of basing, staging, and transit rights that are critical to operations in distant areas.

Military assistance often results in the establishment of substantial stockpiles of modern Soviet weapons in distant areas, such as Libya, that might be utilized in short order by Soviet-sponsored surrogates, such as the Cubans or East Germans, or by Soviet military personnel. As noted above, Soviet determination to help defend several of their client states against liberation movements, many of which are assisted by the United States under the "Reagan doctrine," generated a strengthening of these Soviet military assistance efforts in the mid-1980s.<sup>35</sup>

Soviet intentions and actions in these areas have become much less clear under Gorbachev. Heavily engaged in a massive effort not only to restructure radically the stagnant Soviet economy but also the Soviet political and social system, Gorbachev appears determined to have the Soviet Union play a more selective and less costly role in the Third World. Consequently, Moscow has focused on improving relations with the larger, more developed regional power in the Third World—for example, India, Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina—while clearly seeking to avoid expensive new commitments to underwrite "revolutionary socialist" governments.

Following successful multilateral diplomacy to help facilitate their own withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Soviets have become actively engaged in other multilateral efforts to settle regional conflicts in Cambodia and southern Africa, where prominent Soviet clients, the communist governments of Vietnam, Cuba, and Angola, are deeply involved. At the same time, the Soviets continue to provide large amounts of economic and military

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<sup>35</sup>Francis Fukuyama, "Gorbachev and the Third World," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1986, pp. 715-731.

assistance to these and other "socialist" clients. As regional and internal tensions appear inevitable in the Third World in the years ahead, Soviet arms diplomacy in the form of military equipment sales and the provision of military advisers will remain a significant element of Moscow's foreign and defense policy in these areas.

### III. DOMESTIC DETERMINANTS

The Soviet national security strategy is the product of many diverse influences. These include not only the aspirations and concerns derived from imperial Russian and Soviet historical experience, Marxist-Leninist ideology, and the geography of the USSR, discussed above, but also those arising from the Soviet political, social, and economic systems.

#### POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEM

The CPSU Politburo, which sits atop the combined party and government hierarchies, apparently makes—or at least reviews—all key defense decisions. Moreover, each time a single dominant Soviet political leader has emerged, he has personally taken charge of defense matters. Iosif Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Leonid Brezhnev all chose to confirm their personal responsibility for defense by assuming the post of supreme commander in chief of the Soviet Armed Forces.<sup>1</sup> Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko likely did so as well, and Mikhail Gorbachev almost certainly occupies this vital post, although this has not been publicly confirmed.

#### Centralized Authority

The centralization of authority at the top has several important consequences for defense matters. First, it means that no significant checks are built into the system once the Politburo makes a decision. Second, the lengthy tenure of the senior Soviet political leaders—Stalin dominated the Soviet political scene from the mid-1920s until 1953, Khrushchev from 1957 to 1964, and Brezhnev from 1964 until 1982—has provided considerable continuity in Soviet military policy. Third, the reverse side of this highly personalized pattern is that when a leadership transition occurs, it clearly carries with it considerable potential for significant change in defense policy.

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<sup>1</sup>Stalin assumed this position after the German invasion in 1941. Khrushchev apparently did so in the late 1950s or early 1960s as he sought to impose his will on the military regarding doctrinal and budgetary issues. Brezhnev's accession to the post, date unknown, was acknowledged in the course of a routine article in the military press in fall 1977.

The absence of a regularized procedure for Soviet leadership succession means that in any struggle for power the leading contenders are virtually certain to be attentive to defense issues. Conflict over defense matters was evident in the struggle between Khrushchev and Malenkov during the post-Stalin succession in 1953-1954, and it appears to have surfaced briefly in 1965 following Khrushchev's political demise.<sup>2</sup> It almost certainly played a major role in the sacking of Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, who lost his post as chief of the General Staff in September 1984 during Chernenko's brief tenure as party leader. Fully aware of the probability of a power struggle, the professional military and their allies in the defense production ministries are certain to defend and promote their interests especially actively during such succession periods.

### Secrecy

The closed nature of Soviet political processes also influences both the formulation of Soviet defense policy and our understanding of it in the West. Soviet policymaking in all issue areas is conducted in considerable secrecy. This pattern has been most pronounced with regard to national security matters.

American suspicions about the strict compartmentalization of defense-related information in the Soviet system were dramatically confirmed in an often-recounted incident that occurred during the early phases of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. At that time, the leading Soviet military representative, N. V. Ogarkov (then only a colonel general and a deputy chief of the General Staff) asked the U.S. negotiators not to discuss the details of Soviet strategic weapons deployments with Soviet civilian representatives who, he said, were not supposed to receive such information.<sup>3</sup>

The denial of information to those outside the professional military establishment and a small circle of senior Soviet leaders appeared to persist until at least the mid-1980s. Under Gorbachev, however, as discussed in greater detail below, there appears to be an incipient pluralization of the defense policymaking process.

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<sup>2</sup>The Brezhnev-led collective leadership that succeeded Khrushchev showed signs of disagreement on defense investment priorities in early 1965. See T. W. Wolfe, *The Soviet Military Scene: Institutional and Defense Policy Considerations*, RM-4913 (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, 1966), pp. 64-67.

<sup>3</sup>John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973), p. 192.



Civilian specialists in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Central Committee apparatus, and the institutes of the Academy of Sciences may also now be enjoying somewhat wider access to critical defense-related data. Their public complaints about not receiving relevant information, however, suggest that substantial restrictions on such data remain.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly, however, a new generation of civilian academics has acquired increased expertise on defense matters through their analyses of security and arms control issues over the past decade.

This rather closed policymaking pattern and compartmentalization of defense information has two major consequences. First, in such an environment, those with superior access to the controlled information, in this case for the most part officers of the Ministry of Defense, are in an excellent position to wield great influence in the formulation and implementation of defense policy. The near monopoly of relevant information and expertise in the past crucially strengthened the hand of the armed forces. The erosion of this privileged position inevitably dilutes the military's advantage.

Second, Soviet secrecy also effectively limits the data available to foreign observers about Soviet defense policymaking. It compels Western analysts to rely on partial sources, including memoirs, such observable activities as major weapons deployments, and Kremlinological analyses of defense-related Soviet official publications, in order to piece together plausible explanations of Soviet defense policy.

### Public Opinion

Because of the authoritarian character of the Soviet political system, public opinion until recently has played no direct role in the shaping of the nation's foreign or domestic policies. The burgeoning of public discussion as a result of Gorbachev's *glasnost* policy and the emergence of new opportunities for potentially meaningful political participation in the *soviets* (councils) at many levels appear to be changing this dramatically.

In 1987 and 1988, the state and party sought to elicit public support for their reforms by encouraging letters to the media, television "talk" shows, and other means of directly expressing criticism of the past and present and, they hoped, constructive suggestions on how to achieve a better future. The result has been a flood of criticism, including complaints about the military intervention in Afghanistan ("our Vietnam") and the deployment of the SS-20 missiles that stimulated the Western offsetting deployments of the Pershing II and the ground-launched cruise missiles

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<sup>4</sup>See A. Arbatov, "Deep Cuts in Strategic Arms," *MEMO*, no. 4, April 1988, p. 22.

Nevertheless, direct public influence on most defense matters is not yet evident. The most prominent exception to this pattern has been the strong pressure to eradicate the cruel hazing inflicted on new conscripts, which has been fueled by several media exposes regarding these brutal practices.

### **NATIONALITIES ISSUES**

The Soviet leaders, like the czars before them, face a significant "nationalities problem." The USSR contains over 130 national groups. This polyglot population can be usefully divided into two major ethnic groupings: the European nationalities, including the Great Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Moldavians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians, and the non-Europeans, such as the Uzbeks, Tatars, Kazakhs, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kirgiz, Tadzhiks, Armenians, and Georgians.

The multinational character of the Soviet state is reflected in the federal structure of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with its 15 union republics that are organized along national lines and a host of smaller nationality-based autonomous republics and autonomous regions. Yet despite the formal lip service paid to the rights and traditions of the constituent nationalities, the Soviet leadership long demanded full subordination of these groups to the will of the Communist Party center in Moscow. The Great Russians have dominated and continue to dominate this party core, with substantial assistance from the other Slavs, the Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

Nevertheless, the national identities have persisted and during the Gorbachev period have become an increasingly explosive issue. During 1987-1988, communal violence has flared up in the Transcaucasus, where Armenians and Azerbaijani are locked in an intense and prolonged struggle over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Mass demonstrations, strikes, and sporadic outbreaks of violence have, as noted above, forced Moscow to impose martial law on several occasions.

The Baltic states have also shown an unprecedented upsurge of national assertiveness. Here, the officially sanctioned "popular fronts" that have been formed are demanding greatly increased political and economic autonomy. In Georgia, national sentiments, including demands by some for independence, have also emerged. The CPSU and Soviet government are clearly being tested severely by these threats to public order and possibly to the integrity of the Soviet system.

The Soviet nationalities issue presents another, very different challenge to Soviet defense policy based on the pronounced disparities in the growth rates of the European and non-European populations of the Soviet Union. The non-European, largely Muslim nationalities of Central Asia have produced far higher birthrates over the past few decades, and this disparity is virtually certain to continue and to significantly affect Soviet economic choices in the years ahead.

The Central Asian birthrate has already caused what one author calls the "yellowing" of the Soviet population as the Asiatic peoples become a larger and larger share of the populace. The leaders in Moscow must either succeed in encouraging a migration of the more numerous Asiatics into the labor-short manufacturing centers of the Urals and European Russia or take the necessary steps to expand greatly the industrial facilities of Central Asia.<sup>5</sup>

The increased number of Asians in the annual cohort inducted into the Soviet Armed Forces has contributed to the military's problems. Relations between the majority Slavs and the Asiatic and Transcaucasian minorities in particular have long been marked by considerable hostility and not infrequent physical violence. These relationships are likely to be even more hostile as a result of the growing national tensions in the society as a whole. The military is keenly aware of these tensions and has publicly discussed measures to ameliorate them.<sup>6</sup>

Central Asians and other minorities, whose mastery of the Russian language is often very rudimentary, have traditionally been excluded from most prestigious military career fields, such as service in the Strategic Rocket Forces, the Air Forces, or crack maneuver units of the Ground Forces. They have been commonly assigned, instead, to pick-and-shovel duty with the Construction Troops. The dramatic increases in the non-Slavic share of the annual conscript cohort will compel major adjustments in assignment policies within the armed forces.

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<sup>5</sup>Enders Wimbush and Dmitry Ponomareff, *Alternatives for Mobilizing Soviet Central Asian Labor: Outmigration and Regional Development*, R-2476-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, 1979).

<sup>6</sup>Col Yu. Deryugin, interview in *Argumenty i fakty* (Arguments and Facts), no. 35, 1988, p. 16.

### The Defense Burden and Economy

The Soviet defense effort has long been the primary beneficiary of the Soviet command economy. The extent of this priority has prompted some observers to argue that the accumulation of military power has been the primary social product of the Soviet economic system, while the production of other goods and services is nothing more than necessary social overhead.<sup>7</sup> Although this may be somewhat overstated, the Soviets undoubtedly have consistently accorded military weaponry the highest priority for such scarce inputs as direct budgetary support, highest-quality equipment (including advanced computers and machine tools), and talented scientific and technical personnel.

Throughout the Soviet period, the economy has been largely autarkic. Consequently, questions of access to imports or markets for exports have had little influence on Soviet foreign or defense policy. In recent years, however, serious difficulties have altered the functioning of the Soviet economy, including a marked reduction in the rate of economic growth, the prospect of a near-term decline in oil production, continuing poor performance in agriculture (the economy's endemically weakest area), a sharp decline in investment and labor force growth, widespread corruption, consistently poor worker productivity, and an inability to foster rapid innovation in the relatively backward technological base.<sup>8</sup>

Many of these problems have been evident for several years. They were almost certainly major factors behind the decision of Leonid Brezhnev and his successors to pursue a "policy of selective economic interdependence" as a key element of Soviet detente with the West since the 1970s.<sup>9</sup> While by no means abandoning economic self-reliance, the Soviets have significantly expanded their involvement in the world economy over the past 15 years.

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<sup>7</sup>This point has been made to the author by William E. Odom (Lt Gen, Ret.) of the Hudson Institute and by Robert G. Kaiser in *Russia: The People and the Power* (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), p. 380.

<sup>8</sup>Marshall I. Goldman, "Gorbachev and Economic Reform," *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1985, pp. 56-73; Alice C. Gorlin, "The Soviet Economy," *Current History*, October 1986, pp. 325-328, 343-345; Ed A. Hewitt, "Reform or Rhetoric: Gorbachev and the Soviet Economy," *The Brookings Review*, Fall 1986, pp. 13-20; a special issue on Soviet economic reform in *Soviet Economy*, vol. 3, October-December 1987; and Ed A. Hewitt, *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988).

<sup>9</sup>John P. Hardt, "Soviet Economic Capabilities and Defense Resources," in *The Soviet Threat: Myths and Realities*, G. Kirk and N. H. Wessell, eds. (New York: Academy of Political Science, 1978), p. 124.

Substantial technology imports, joint ventures in the expansion of motor transport, and major grain imports have failed, however, to reverse the adverse trends in the performance of the Soviet economy. Thus, it appears that Gorbachev and his supporters have come to the conclusion that the Soviet Union must radically restructure not only its entire economy but also the political system and the consciousness of the Soviet people if it is to build a modern economy in the postindustrial era.

The system's severe economic difficulties have significantly affected Soviet defense policy. Declining overall Soviet growth rates in the mid-1970s prompted the Soviet leadership to cut back on the growth rate of defense expenditures as well. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the Soviets cut back on the growth of capital investment for economic growth and on defense spending while maintaining increasing rates of investment in agriculture and consumer-related industries. Annual Soviet defense spending, which increased at a rate of 4 to 5 percent in the first 11 years under Brezhnev (1965-1975), slipped to roughly 2 percent from 1976 to 1985; during the same period, investment in the procurement of new weapons showed no growth at all. The defense budget has grown at the rate of 2 to 3 percent between 1985 and 1989.<sup>10</sup>

This reduced growth rate of defense spending, which continued in the face of dramatic increases in the U.S. defense budget between 1979 and 1985, prompted increasingly strident demands by senior Soviet military figures, led by Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, then chief of the General Staff. Clearly disturbed by the expanded U.S. defense program and the more assertive Reagan foreign policy, these officers spoke often of the growing danger of war and the resultant need to increase Soviet defenses.

Perhaps partly as a result of these outspoken criticisms, in recent years the civilian leadership has subjected the Soviet military to some direct rebukes and symbolic slights. The most striking of these was, of course, the abrupt removal from office of Marshal S. L. Sokolov, the Minister of Defense, and Marshal of Aviation A. I. Koldunov, Deputy Minister of Defense and commander in chief of the Air Defense Forces, along with several other high-ranking air defense personnel in May 1987.

These events were precipitated by the much-publicized landing on Red Square by Matthias Rust, a young West German aviator who without Soviet authorization piloted a

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<sup>10</sup>See Richard F. Kaufman, "Causes of the Slowdown in Soviet Defense Spending," *Soviet Economy*, Jan-Mar 1985, pp. 9-31; Abraham S. Becker, *Sitting on Bayonets: The Soviet Defense Burden and the Slowdown of Soviet Defense Spending*, RAND/UCLA Center for the Study of Soviet International Behavior, JRS-01, December 1985.

small sports plane into the Soviet Union from Helsinki. The Rust incident was followed by harsh public criticism of the Soviet military, including unprecedented charges of incompetence and "toadyism" by then Politburo member Boris Yeltsin, the first secretary of the Moscow Communist Party organization at that time. Throughout the remainder of 1987 and 1988, the military received unprecedented public criticism concerning corruption, inefficiency, failures in discipline, and the harsh hazing of conscripts.

Other less direct but nevertheless significant indications of party displeasure have included the failure to make either Marshal S. L. Sokolov, the Minister of Defense from December 1984 until May 1987, or his successor, General D. T. Yazov, a full member of the Politburo as their two predecessors had been. (During much of this same period, V. M. Chebrikov, then chief of the KGB, a historic institutional rival of the Ministry of Defense, was accorded full member status.) In addition, senior military figures were conspicuously absent from the Lenin mausoleum during Chernenko's funeral in February 1985.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, in September 1984, the outspoken Marshal Ogarkov was suddenly relieved of his post as chief of the General Staff, almost certainly a result of his insistent statements regarding the growing American military threat and the need for increased Soviet defenses. This move was accompanied by informal explanations from various Soviet sources that Ogarkov's "unpartylike" behavior had necessitated his removal.<sup>11</sup>

Pressures to contain or even reduce defense spending may well have grown as Gorbachev's *perestroika* campaign has failed to produce positive results. In summer and fall 1988, the statements of senior military figures spoke of "doing more with less" and an emphasis on quality rather than quantity in future Soviet defense preparations.<sup>12</sup>

These pressures to ease the Soviet defense burden and the resulting tensions between the senior Soviet political and military leadership will most certainly persist and even intensify over the next several years. This will occur because Gorbachev and company appear determined to devote increased resources to the machine-building and metal-working industries and other selected sectors in an effort to rejuvenate the Soviet economy while also maintaining high investments in the agriculture, energy, and light industry (consumer) sectors.

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<sup>11</sup>See Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the High Command*, R-3521-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, June 1987), for an excellent review of relations between the senior party leadership and the Soviet military high command between 1976 and 1986.

<sup>12</sup>For Akhromeyev's comments, see Maj I. Sas, "Restructuring Demands Action Meeting of the USSR Armed Forces General Staff Party Aktiv," *Krasnaya zvezda*, August 13, 1988.

Nevertheless, one must keep firmly in mind that although the annual rate of increase in Soviet defense spending over the past ten years has been only half that of the previous decade, defense expenditures did in fact increase and they did so from a very large base. They were and have remained some 14 to 17 percent of a large and slowly expanding gross national product that remains the second largest in the world. And even determined attention to overall economic expansion in the years ahead is unlikely to produce a substantial reduction in the absolute size of the annual Soviet defense budget.

#### **FORCE EMPLOYMENT DOCTRINE**

Over the years, the Soviets have developed a distinctive style of warfare that reflects various influences. These include: imperial Russian military tradition (transmitted to the Red Army by a sizable core of former czarist officers who were particularly active in the development of Soviet military science in the 1920s and 1930s), the geography of the USSR, the numbers and types of weapons made available by the high-priority defense sector of the Soviet economy, and a unique Soviet approach to theater war that emerged from the "military science specialists" working in the General Staff and the prestigious senior military academies in Moscow beginning in the early 1930s.<sup>13</sup>

#### **PREPARING FOR WAR**

The Soviets devote an extraordinary effort to the study of how to prepare for and fight wars. Much of this work is done by specially trained military officers who hold advanced degrees in military or philosophical science and who work in the staffs and academies of the Ministry of Defense. Yet, the program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Soviet military writings repeatedly emphasize that it is not the military but the leadership of the Communist Party and Soviet state that ultimately "elaborates and defines" a unified series of views called military doctrine.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>For an excellent review of these and other factors, see Benjamin S. Lambeth, "The Sources of Soviet Military Doctrine," in *Comparative Defense Policy*, F. B. Horton, A. C. Rogerson, and E. L. Warner III, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 200-215.

<sup>14</sup>Maj Gen S. N. Kozlov, ed., *The Officer's Handbook* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971), translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force, p. 62; "Military Doctrine," *SME*, vol. 3, p. 229.

### **Military Doctrine**

Military doctrine sets forth Soviet war aims, the probable methods of waging armed combat, the tasks to be performed by the Armed Forces, and the measures required for the all-around social, economic, and military-technical preparation of the country as a whole for war.<sup>15</sup> Under the influence of Gorbachev's "new political thinking," the Soviets have made much of the fact that their military doctrine is now oriented, first and foremost, toward the prevention of war rather than toward the fighting of it.

Soviet military doctrine has both a sociopolitical and a military-technical dimension. The sociopolitical side is concerned with the probable causes, the broad political-economic character, and the consequences of war. Officers specially trained in Marxist-Leninist philosophy, who are often affiliated with the Main Political Administration and its Lenin Military Political Academy, frequently write on these matters. Soviet civilian commentators also appear to have some license to articulate views on these questions, albeit within the context of the general line approved by the party leadership.

The military-technical aspect of Soviet military doctrine refers to the study of military operational matters. This activity has traditionally fallen strictly within the purview of the Ministry of Defense. The growth of interest and expertise among Soviet civilian specialists in arms control and defense, noted earlier, raises the possibility that others are beginning to have influence on these operational matters.

While they are fully prepared to accord the party leadership the right to make the final decisions on the nation's military doctrine, the professional military clearly would prefer that this doctrine be firmly based on their expert views on operational matters. This sentiment is vividly captured in the judgment that as "military doctrine becomes more scientifically sound and, therefore, more vital, the greater its reliance on the objective evaluations and conclusions of military science."<sup>16</sup>

### **Military Science**

The Soviets have developed a complex taxonomy of military science, the components of which include a general theory of military science, military art, military history, military pedagogy, military administration, military geography, military economics, and military-technical sciences.<sup>17</sup> Groups of uniformed specialists actively research and write in all of

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<sup>15</sup>"Military Doctrine," *SME*, vol. 3, p. 225; Marshal V. D. Sokolovskiy, ed., *Voennaia strategiya* (Military Strategy), 3d ed., rev. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968), p. 38.

<sup>16</sup>Kozlov, ed., *The Officer's Handbook*, p. 64.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 50-61, "Military Science," *SME*, vol. 2, p. 184.



these areas. Their work appears in a host of journals and books that steadily pour out of Voennoe izdatel'stvo (Voenizdat), the Ministry of Defense's publishing house, and in classified publications, such as the General Staff's limited circulation monthly, *Voyennaya mysl'* (Military Thought). Among these disciplines, Soviet work on military art, with its three subcategories (strategy, operational art, and tactics), most significantly affects the day-to-day business of the Ministry of Defense.

**Soviet military strategy**, which investigates the preparation for and waging of large-scale theater campaigns and war as a whole, is elaborated largely in the General Staff's Military Science Administration and the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff. Its guiding tenets appear not only in the operational plans developed by the General Staff's Main Operations Directorate, but also in the adjustments in the organizational structure of the Armed Forces, in peacetime training and exercises, and in the logistic planning that the General Staff oversees.

**Operational art**, which the Soviets define as the portion of military art concerned with the preparation and conduct of operations at the front and army levels, is developed by both the General Staff and the individual services. The General Staff's Military Science Administration and the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff address this level when it involves coordinated multiservice, combined-arms operations. The operations departments of the services' main staffs and their specialized higher academies work out matters of operational art related to planning, operational control, and logistic support, with regard to their unique spheres of action.

Thus, commanders, staff officers, and academic researchers in the Air Forces are involved, for example, in continuous study of the conduct of independent theater air operations, which combine fighter, fighter-bomber, and bomber elements, to conduct massive conventional or nuclear strikes on key targets in the enemy's rear. Similarly, staff officers and military theorists in the Navy are likely to be continuously refining concepts for mounting operations against U.S. carrier task forces and strategic submarines, while their Ground Forces compatriots seek to affect the manner in which they can introduce follow-on maneuver units into the battle so as to exploit the anticipated breakthrough in the enemy's forward defenses.

**Tactics**, which deals with the preparation and conduct of operations at the division level and below, also has both a combined-arms and an individual service dimension. Work on the former is done in the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff and probably the Frunze Military Academy as well, while the latter is clearly the business of each of the services and their constituent branches of troops.

Over the years, the Soviet military has worked hard to apply the latest scientific techniques to military problems. Military philosophers and military scientists have been true to the scientific aspirations of their Marxist-Leninist ideology, as they have diligently sought to discover the Marxist-Leninist laws of war.<sup>18</sup> On a more practical level, military officers have developed several analytical modeling techniques designed, for example, to assist in calculating the correlation of military forces, to illuminate cost and effectiveness trade-offs in weapons acquisition, to investigate and improve processes of military command and control, to develop optimum tactics for various engagements, and to establish "norms" for optimum rates of advance, firepower support requirements, and general logistic support.

Work on the application of scientific techniques to military problems is apparently conducted in the research bodies attached to the major military academies, the service staffs, and the General Staff.<sup>19</sup> These efforts have produced an enormous body of specialized, highly technical literature, which has not yet been well mined by Western students of Soviet military affairs.<sup>20</sup> Soviet analytical efforts that are viewed as particularly useful are likely to find their way to the operating forces in the form of new norms for staffs and commanders to employ in planning and conducting combat operations; computational devices, including

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<sup>18</sup>See Colonel V. Ye. Savkin, *The Basic Principles of Operational Art and Tactics* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1972), translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force.

<sup>19</sup>See Stephen M. Meyer, "Civilian and Military Influence in Managing the Arms Race in the USSR," in Robert J. Art et al., eds., *Reorganizing America's Defense* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985), pp. 44-47. David Holloway, *Technology, Management and the Soviet Military Establishment*, Adelphi Papers, no. 76 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971), pp. 6-9. Maj Gen Petro G. Grigorenko reports that he initiated work on cybernetics in the Scientific Research Branch of the Frunze Military Academy in the mid-1950s and created a faculty for military cybernetics in 1959; see Petro G. Grigorenko, *Memoirs* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1982), p. 229. For a lengthy description of the extensive military scientific research activities undertaken at the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff, which are ranked on a par with its teaching activities, see V. G. Kulikov, *Akademiia general' nogo shtaba* (The Academy of the General Staff), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), pp. 178-225.

<sup>20</sup>Some good efforts, however, have been made, including Stephen M. Meyer, "Civilian and Military Influence," in Art et al.; Allen S. Rehm, *An Assessment of Military Operations Research in the USSR*, Professional Paper no. 116 (Arlington, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, September 1963); John Erickson, "Soviet Military Operational Research: Objectives and Methods," *Strategic Review*, vol. V, no. 2, Spring 1977, pp. 63-73; John Hemsley, *Soviet Troop Control* (New York: Brassey's Publishers Ltd., 1982); and Stephen M. Meyer, *Soviet Theater Nuclear Forces*, Part 1: *Development of Doctrine and Objectives* and *Soviet Theater Nuclear Forces*; Part 2: *Capabilities and Implications*, Adelphi Papers, nos. 187, 188 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1983-84).

computers with programs to solve equations rapidly, facilitating performance of key command or staff functions; and new tactics for accomplishing a given mission.<sup>21</sup>

### **Military Policy**

Military doctrine and its cornerstone, military art, largely shape Soviet military policy. They establish the broad direction of this policy and identify specific operational capabilities to which the Soviet political and military leaders aspire. As such, military doctrine provides the context in which the General Staff oversees adjustments in military organization, the drafting of operational and mobilization plans for war, and the training of troops, and establishes the requirements for the development and procurement of new weapons.

The Soviets' contemporary approach to theater war—and, to a considerable extent, intercontinental conflict as well—embodied in their military-technical doctrine clearly reflects key elements of their doctrine for massed armored warfare, called the theory of operations in depth, developed more than 50 years ago.<sup>22</sup> These guiding principles include commitments to seize the initiative at the outset of hostilities; to conduct bold offensive operations with massed, armor-heavy forces, including specialized mobile formations for the rapid exploitation of initial battlefield successes; and to operate at high tempo in order to annihilate completely the enemy's military forces.

In recent years, the Soviets have devoted greater attention to defensive operations in theater warfare. These continue to be viewed, however, as a temporary form of activity which the Pact would have to employ under unfavorable circumstances, while gathering strength to gain the initiative and mount a decisive counteroffensive or to hold certain sectors of the front while the majority of Pact forces are massed on main axes to overwhelm NATO's defenders.

Soviet doctrine also calls for all possible offensive and defensive efforts to limit the damage that the Soviet Union itself would suffer in a war. Soviet military theory

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<sup>21</sup>On the use of various norms in Soviet operational planning, see Christopher Donnelly, "The Sustainability of the Soviet Ground Forces," unpublished manuscript, Fall 1987, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup>See Marshal M. V. Zakharov, ed., *Voprosy strategii i operativnogo iskusstva v sovetskikh voennykh trudakh, 1917-1940* (Problems of Strategy and Operational Art in Soviet Military Works, 1917-1940), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965), pp. 17-24; John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), pp. 349-354, 404-411; Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, "Deep Operations Battle," in *SME*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), pp. 574-578.

categorically rejects the dominance of a single weapon or branch of the service in the conduct of these operations. It calls instead for the reinforcing efforts of all ground, sea, and air forces to achieve victory by the so-called combined-arms concept.<sup>23</sup>

Contemporary Soviet military writings deal with various facets of complex scenarios for large-scale theater conflicts fought with conventional weapons and for general nuclear war. With regard to a global nuclear war, this literature describes several aspects of the life-or-death clash between the opposing socialist and capitalist systems, including: (1) major theater land and air battles; (2) war at sea; (3) regional and intercontinental missile and bomber exchanges; and (4) extensive efforts to defend the Soviet homeland. Highlights of the distinctive Soviet force employment doctrine follow.

### THEATER WAR

The Soviets prepare for war fought with both nuclear and conventional weapons in the various theaters of military operations (TVDs) around the Soviet Union. Their scenario for global nuclear war, first set forth in the late 1950s and early 1960s, includes major campaigns fought with nuclear weapons in adjacent theaters located in Europe and Asia. These theater campaigns may precede or occur simultaneously with massed intercontinental nuclear strikes against the United States.

This nuclear campaign in the theater may be fought with nuclear weapons from the outset of hostilities or it may arise from the escalation of a war begun with conventional weapons. In either case, Soviet doctrine calls for the employment of several massed strikes throughout the depth of the theater against a combination of military, economic, and political targets.<sup>24</sup> These strikes are to be followed up by combined-arms air-land offensives along several main axes of attack—offensives designed to rapidly complete the defeat of the enemy's military forces and to occupy his territory.

Beginning in the mid-1960s but with growing emphasis since the late 1970s, the Soviets have added preparations for conducting what Marshal Ogarkov has called "a strategic operation within a theater of military operations conducted solely with conventional weapons."<sup>25</sup> This would involve the conduct of large-scale ground-air operations against

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<sup>23</sup>See Col Gen M. A. Gareyev, *M. V. Frunze—voyennyy teoretik* (M. V. Frunze—Military Theoretician), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985); Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, "Military Strategy," in *SME*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979), pp. 559-563; Sokolovskiy, ed., *Military Strategy*; and commentaries such as Benjamin S. Lambeth, *How to Think about Soviet Military Doctrine*, P-5939 (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, 1978).

<sup>24</sup>For a superb historical account and analysis of Soviet concepts and capabilities for conducting nuclear war in the critical European theater, see Stephen M. Meyer, *Soviet Theater Nuclear Forces*, Parts 1 and 2.

<sup>25</sup>Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, "For Our Soviet Motherland: Guarding Peaceful Labor," *Kommunist*, no. 10, 1981, p. 86.

NATO and, possibly, the People's Republic of China, using only conventional weapons over a period of many days and even weeks.

This TVD strategic operation would be fought under the constant threat of nuclear escalation. The Soviets say they are prepared to initiate extensive nuclear operations at any time during its conduct. Consequently, they would maintain a high state of nuclear readiness to ensure that they could preempt any enemy attempt to initiate the large-scale use of nuclear weapons. Should such an escalation occur, the nuclear theater offensive would be carried out in the manner described above.

The Soviets foresee a complex scenario for a large-scale theater war fought without recourse to nuclear weapons. Standard Soviet training depictions of war in Central Europe, for example, open with a large-scale NATO invasion that forces the Pact on the defensive on its own territory. Recent Soviet military writings indicate that these defensive operations should be marked by "dynamism and activity." They should feature rapid, bold maneuver, effective use of obstacles and fortifications, and flexible counterattacks by specially configured tank and motorized rifle formations.<sup>26</sup>

In such scenarios, the Pact eventually contains and then repels the NATO invader by means of a vigorous counteroffensive. The Soviet concept for counteroffensive offensive operations calls for the massing of armor-heavy forces along selected main axes of attack to carry out a series of simultaneous breakthroughs of the enemy's defenses. The Soviets would exploit these breakthroughs immediately by introducing additional echelons, which would advance rapidly into the enemy's rear area.

The follow-on forces will be led by specially configured "operational maneuver groups." These division- or corps-sized formations will break away from the bulk of the second-echelon units to open the way for their advances. The majority of second-echelon formations, in turn, would seek to encircle and destroy the enemy's main formations and occupy his territory in a matter of days.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>See Lt Gen A. I. Yevseyev, "The Experience of Maneuvering for Concentrating Efforts against Enemy Assault Groupings in the Course of a Front Defensive Operation," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* (Military History Journal, hereafter cited as *VIZh*), no. 9, September 1986, pp. 12-23; Maj Gen A. P. Maryshev, "Certain Questions of the Strategic Defensive in the Great Patriotic War," *VIZh*, no. 6, June 1986, pp. 9-16; Col G. Miranovich and Col V. Zhitarenko, "What Makes Defense Strong?" *Krasnaya zvezda*, December 9, 1987.

<sup>27</sup>See Phillip A. Petersen and John G. Hines, *The Soviet Conventional Offensive in Europe*, DDB-2622-4-83 (Washington, D.C.: Defense Intelligence Agency, 1983); Christopher N. Donnelly, "The Operational Maneuver Group: A New Challenge to NATO," *International Defense Review*, September 1982, pp. 1177-1186; Major Henry S. Shields, "Why the OMG?" *Military Review*, November 1985, pp. 4-13; John G. Hines and

Special "assault landings" in the enemy's rear are to assist the high-speed advances by the lead exploitation forces. A variety of forces, including airborne units, recently created air assault brigades, *spetsnaz* (special-purpose forces), and naval infantry formations will move over and around the front lines in transport aircraft, helicopters, and amphibious craft to seize key facilities and terrain. These attacks are designed to severely disrupt the enemy's defense efforts and to facilitate the advance of second-echelon exploitation forces coming over land from the front.<sup>28</sup>

This land offensive fought with conventional weapons is also to be supported by an extensive "air operation" that integrates attacks by over 1000 fighter-interceptors, fighter-bombers, and medium bomber units, assault landings by the forces noted above, and possibly strikes by conventionally armed tactical ballistic missiles. The Soviets will combine these elements in a series of massed raids conducted over several days to destroy enemy forces, especially nuclear delivery systems and aircraft, throughout the theater. With these raids, the Soviets hope to reduce the enemy's nuclear strike potential and to gain air superiority in the theater.<sup>29</sup>

In a nuclear conflict, these attacks would be supplemented by massed strikes of nuclear-armed operational-tactical missiles and fighter-bombers based in the theater, as well as longer-range regional strategic nuclear missile and bomber forces based in the USSR. These strikes would cover enemy targets located near the battlefield and throughout the enemy's deep rear area.

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Phillip A. Petersen, "The Warsaw Pact Strategic Offensive: The OMG in Context," *International Defense Review*, pp. 1391-1395; C. J. Dicks, "Soviet Operational Manoeuvre Groups: A Closer Look," *International Defense Review*, June 1983, pp. 769-776.

<sup>28</sup>See Christopher N. Donnelly, "Operations in the Enemy Rear: Soviet Doctrine and Tactics," *International Defense Review*, January 1980, pp. 35-41; Major Roger E. Bort, "Air Assault Brigades: New Element in the Soviet Desant Force Structure," *Military Review*, October 1983, pp. 21-38; David C. Isby, "The Vertical Threat: Air Assault and Airmobile Brigades of the Soviet Army," *Amphibious Warfare Review*, August 1985, pp. 50-54; Mark L. Urban, "The Strategic Role of Soviet Airborne Troops," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, July 14, 1984, pp. 26-28, 30-32; Viktor Suvorov, "*Spetsnaz*: The Soviet Union's Special Forces," *International Defense Review*, September 1983, pp. 1209-1216.

<sup>29</sup>See Phillip A. Petersen and John R. Clark, "Soviet Air and Anti-air Operations," *Air University Review*, Mar/Apr 1985, pp. 36-54; Ye. G. Veraka and M. N. Kozhevnikov, "Air Operations," *SME*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), pp. 281-282; Robert P. Berman, *Soviet Air Power in Transition* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978), pp. 11, 66-73; Chief Marshal of Aviation P. Kutakhov, "The Conduct of Air Operations," *VIZh*, no. 6, June 1972, pp. 20-28.

## WAR AT SEA

Soviet naval operations in a theater war will emphasize the protection of the Soviet homeland from attacks from the sea. This will involve operations to destroy enemy naval combatants operating within attack range of the USSR, in particular aircraft carriers, and surface ships and submarines equipped with land-attack sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). To combat carrier battle groups and SLCM platforms approaching the Soviet Union in the Norwegian Sea or in the Pacific Ocean opposite the Soviet Far East, the Soviets will employ a layered defense-in-depth that integrates the efforts of surface ships equipped with cruise missiles, submarines, and land-based naval aviation using either conventional or nuclear arms. They will also rely on carrier-based aviation and surface ships serving as radar pickets and surface-to-air missile platforms to help air defense fighters destroy enemy aircraft and cruise missiles approaching Soviet territory.

Over the past decade the Soviets have also developed a concept calling for the employment of combined antisubmarine warfare (ASW) assets—attack submarines, surface ships, and ASW aircraft—in a deeply echeloned bastion defense. These combined ASW operations are designed to protect Soviet nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) deployed in the “closed” Barents and White seas off the northwest coast of the USSR and the Sea of Okhotsk in the Far East from attacks by enemy attack submarines.<sup>30</sup> They will involve such operations by land-based ASW aircraft working in concert with many of the same surface ships and submarines arrayed in depth that are to be used to protect the Soviet Union from attacks from the sea.

The forces of the Soviet Navy are also expected to conduct amphibious operations, as noted above, using naval infantry and ground force units along the maritime flanks in direct support of theater land offensives and independently to seize key islands and straits, including the Danish straits, the Turkish straits, and possibly Iceland. They must be prepared as well to execute coastal defense operations to deny the enemy the ability to mount successful amphibious assaults against the Soviet Union.

The Soviets will also almost certainly use a portion of their increasingly quiet Akula and Victor III attack submarines in an effort to locate and destroy enemy SSBNs at sea. Their prospects for success in this mission remain very poor, however, owing to their serious deficiencies in wide-area submarine detection and tracking.

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<sup>30</sup>Michael McGwire, “Naval Power and Soviet Global Strategy,” *International Security*, Spring 1979, pp. 170-173; Robert P. Berman and John C. Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces: Requirements and Responses* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1982), pp. 62-65.

Soviet naval air and submarine forces are tasked as well to interdict enemy sea lines of communications, in particular the maritime resupply and reinforcement from the United States to Western Europe and the Far East. This appears, however, to be a secondary mission.

Throughout a theater conventional conflict, Soviet submarines carrying sea-launched ballistic and cruise missiles would remain prepared for mounting attacks against key targets in nearby theaters or against the critical targets in North America. Those systems committed to cover targets in nearby theaters will be prepared to execute their attacks while the intercontinental strike forces remain on hold.

### INTERCONTINENTAL NUCLEAR WARFARE

Soviet doctrine regarding preparations for a possible strategic nuclear exchange reveals a strong predisposition to launch a preemptive strike against U.S. strategic forces if the USSR can reliably detect U.S. preparations to commence nuclear operations.<sup>31</sup> If they do not preempt, the Soviets are apparently prepared to "launch on tactical warning" or to "launch under attack," or failing that, simply to retaliate after absorbing the initial U.S. strike.<sup>32</sup>

The Soviets could, of course, also initiate a nuclear war with a surprise, would-be disarming first strike. Although, for obvious reasons, their public statements do not acknowledge such a possibility, Soviet military writings consistently emphasize the value of achieving surprise at the beginning of a war, and their force-modeling literature has explored scenarios beginning with a massive first strike carried out by either of the two superpowers.

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<sup>31</sup>Soviet doctrinal writings spoke openly of such preemption in the 1950s. During the 1960s and 1970s, although they largely avoided explicit references to their intention to strike preemptively, these writings sometimes included highly suggestive euphemisms such as claiming a readiness "to frustrate" or "to nip in the bud" any Western nuclear missile attack. See Edward L. Warner III, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics: An Institutional Analysis* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 151. There have been few Soviet discussions of large-scale nuclear warfare since the late 1970s and thus we have little recent evidence regarding Soviet thoughts on nuclear war initiation.

<sup>32</sup>See Marshal N. I. Krylov, "The Nuclear Shield of the Soviet State," *Voennaia mysl'* (Military Thought), no. 11, November 1967, p. 20; Gen S. Ivanov, "Soviet Military Doctrine and Strategy," *Voennaia mysl'*, no. 5, May 1969, p. 48; Maj Gen N. Vasendin and Col. N. Kuznetsov, "Modern Warfare and Surprise Attack," *Voennaia mysl'*, no. 6, June 1968, pp. 46-47.



Regardless of the manner in which the initial Soviet nuclear operations might begin, the USSR would employ a large number of ICBMs, SLBMs, and strategic bombers in initial massed salvos to strike simultaneously at a wide range of "counterforce" and "countervalue" targets. These targets include U.S. strategic forces (ICBM silos, SSBNs in port, and bomber bases), key military command and control facilities, major groupings of general purpose forces at garrisons, airfields, and naval bases, and a variety of economic and political objectives, including electrical power systems, stocks of strategic raw materials, and large industrial and transport centers.<sup>33</sup>

The Soviets consider devastating strikes against these targets, executed in the "initial period" of a general nuclear war, to be essential. They also believe that they can achieve "final victory" in the war only with the combined efforts of all arms and services, including major air-land offensives in adjacent theaters and an active war at sea against Western naval power.

Soviet doctrinal writings have displayed little interest in the possibility of imposing finely tuned limitations on nuclear warfare for symbolic or bargaining purposes at either the central strategic or theater levels. Their writings indicate full awareness of possible limitations in terms of targets struck and the numbers and yields of nuclear weapons employed, as well as a potential willingness to consider avoiding nuclear use in secondary theaters. They would thus spare cities that they hoped to capture, i.e., cities located in theaters adjacent to the USSR or Eastern Europe.<sup>34</sup>

During high-level negotiations in 1972, Brezhnev suggested to Henry Kissinger the possibility of maintaining the United States and USSR as sanctuaries during a nuclear war fought in Europe.<sup>35</sup> In recent years, Soviet civilian academics have explicitly recognized the value to both sides of mutually avoiding attacks on one another's national command authorities, as these provide a means to control escalation and to support war termination.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Maj Gen V. Zemskov, "Characteristic Features of Modern Wars and Possible Methods of Conducting Them," *Voennaia mysl'* (Military Thought), no. 7, July 1969, p. 20; Joseph D. Douglas and Amoretta M. Hoeber, *Soviet Strategy for Nuclear War* (Palo Alto: Hoover Institution Press, 1979), pp. 14-33. Some strategic forces, particularly SLBMs and increasingly mobile ICBMs, would be held in reserve for follow-on attacks in a protracted nuclear war.

<sup>34</sup>See Notra Trulock III, "Soviet Perspectives on Limited Nuclear Warfare," in Fred S. Hoffman et al., eds., *Swords and Shields: NATO, the USSR and New Choices for Long Range Offense and Defense* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1987), pp. 53-85.

<sup>35</sup>Kissinger, viewing Brezhnev's proposal as designed to promote the breakup of NATO, did not respond to the Soviet suggestion; see Henry A. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1982), p. 277.

<sup>36</sup>Sagdeyev et al., *Strategic Stability Under the Conditions of Radical Nuclear Arms Reductions*, p. 22.

Moreover, the Soviet military has long favored planning to allow a careful, militarily efficient application of nuclear weapons designed to achieve the desired objectives with the fewest possible weapons. Such limitations would simultaneously minimize the disruption of military advances in adjacent theaters that would inevitably accompany substantial nuclear use.

Nevertheless, the Soviets have publicly rejected U.S. concepts of highly limited nuclear warfare as artificial "rules of the game." They continue to embrace instead a concept of large-scale nuclear strikes that would likely involve, at a minimum, hundreds of nuclear weapons, which they would employ for maximum military and political effectiveness. Despite this consistent doctrinal antipathy toward small-scale, nuclear use, growing Soviet capabilities could nevertheless support a wide spectrum of controlled nuclear operations, which they could employ in a crisis.<sup>37</sup>

The Soviets also assign high priority to the defense of the homeland so as to minimize the destructive effects of enemy attack, to maintain political control by the Communist Party, to reconstitute critical military forces, and to facilitate economic recuperation. Consequently, they intend to conduct active anti-air, anti-missile, and anti-space (anti-satellite) operations in combination with extensive civil defense activities to reduce the damage inflicted on the USSR by enemy forces that survive the vigorous Soviet counterforce attacks.

Soviet doctrinal writings are ambiguous regarding the likely duration of a general nuclear war. On one hand, they often speak of the massed nuclear exchanges that are expected to occur during the "initial period," which may last a few hours or a few days, as being potentially decisive in determining the final outcome of the war. On the other hand, they often point out that a global nuclear war might be "protracted" and write of the need to conduct operations over several weeks or even months and to shift the economy to a wartime footing for purposes of sustained wartime production and recuperation.

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<sup>37</sup>For a more complete discussion of Soviet views on limited nuclear war, see Edward L. Warner III, *Soviet Concepts and Capabilities for Limited Nuclear War: What We Know and How We Know It*, N-2769-AF (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, February 1989).

#### IV. DECISIONMAKING FOR DEFENSE

##### TOP-LEVEL ORGANS

In analyzing the pattern of defense policymaking and implementation in the USSR, it is useful to think in terms of the "decisional trajectory" model developed by David Finley and Jan Triska.<sup>1</sup> This approach analyzes policymaking as a sequence of events beginning with problem identification and proceeding with information collection and interpretation, the development and analysis of alternative courses of action, decisionmaking (i.e., the selection of a course of action), policy elaboration, and, finally, policy implementation.

The trajectory aspect of the metaphor indicates that these stages generally take place at successively higher levels of authority on the path upward toward decision and then drop down once again to lower levels during the process of policy elaboration and implementation. When combined with examination of the roles, resources, and tactics of the various organizations and individuals involved, the decision trajectory model can significantly assist us in understanding the dynamics of Soviet defense policy.

Many organizations within the vast Soviet party and government bureaucracies engage in defense policy development, decisionmaking, and execution. They include both specialized defense-related agencies and generalist bodies whose involvements in national security issues constitute only a portion of their overall activities. Some operate across the full range of national security matters, while others are involved in a single defense area, such as weapons acquisition. Many serve as arenas for political competition among key individuals and groups interested in shaping Soviet defense policy.

##### Politburo

On the party side, the bodies of note include the Politburo, leading secretaries, and certain departments of the CPSU apparatus that are formally attached to the Central Committee. Foremost among these is the Politburo, a generalist organ that exercises ultimate decisional authority on all issues of consequence in the Soviet Union. This small body, whose exact size varies slightly over time, currently consists of twelve full (voting) members and eight nonvoting (candidate) members. It can be presumed to have the prerogative of formally approving all key defense decisions. This places the Politburo at the

<sup>1</sup>David D. Finley and Jan F. Triska, *Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1968), pp. 72-74.

apogee of the decisional trajectory for such diverse defense matters as the formulation of Soviet military strategy, the development and acquisition of weaponry, and, of course, the threat to use and the actual employment of Soviet military power.

### Defense Council

Although it has ultimate decisional authority, the full Politburo is almost certainly unable to maintain close supervision of defense matters on a regular basis. The highest level body with this responsibility is the Defense Council (*Soviet oborony*). This organization, although officially linked in the governmental structure to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet by Article 121 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution, appears to function as a defense subcommittee for the Politburo.

The Defense Council is the latest in a long line of high-level councils with combined civilian and military membership that have supervised Soviet defense matters. Soviet publications have never disclosed its membership beyond announcing that the CPSU general secretary—first Brezhnev, then Andropov, Chernenko, and now Gorbachev—have been its chairman.

Mikhail Gorbachev is likely to be joined in the Defense Council by other key Politburo members who occupy the most senior party-state positions with initial defense and foreign policy oversight responsibilities. These probably include the chairman of the presidium of both the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Soviet; those with special responsibilities for defense-related matters, including the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Central Committee secretaries supervising defense production; the Committee for State Security (KGB); and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to this definition, the Politburo members serving on the Defense Council in addition to Gorbachev as of fall 1988 are N. I. Ryzhkov (chairman of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers), Army General D. T. Yazov (Minister of Defense), E. A. Shevardnadze (Foreign Minister), O. D. Baklanov (the Central Committee secretary overseeing defense production), V. M. Chebrikov (the Central Committee secretary responsible for the KGB), and A. N. Yakovlev (the Central Committee secretary supervising foreign affairs).

The General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces apparently provides staff support for the Defense Council.<sup>2</sup> This General Staff involvement provides the basis for the regular

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<sup>2</sup>Precedents exist for such an arrangement: General Shtemenko writes that while chief of the General Staff in the late 1940s, he was the secretary of the Higher (Supreme) Military Soviet, the precursor of the Defense Council. General of the Army S. M. Shtemenko, *General'nyi shtab v gody voyny* (The General Staff in the War Years), Book 2

participation in Defense Council meetings of Army General M. A. Moiseyev, the chief of the General Staff, who probably acts as the council's executive secretary. Whatever its permanent membership, other senior party, government, and military figures almost certainly are invited to attend the deliberations of the Defense Council on a case-by-case basis when issues within their special competence are under consideration.

No information is available on the activities of the Defense Council. However, memoir accounts of the activities of its predecessors, known variously as the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense, the Council of Labor and Defense, and the Supreme Military Council, indicate that it probably serves as the forum for discussing significant weapons development and procurement programs, defense budgets, and major force deployments.

Defense Council deliberations, carefully orchestrated in accordance with the consensus-oriented style that has apparently marked its proceedings since the Brezhnev period, apparently culminate in preliminary decisions that are, in turn, considered and almost certainly approved by the full Politburo. During wartime, the Defense Council would probably provide the nucleus for the formation of a new state defense committee, similar to the body of that name created during World War II, which would oversee the overall Soviet war effort.

### **Supreme High Command**

During World War II, the Soviets created the General Headquarters (*Stavka*) of the Supreme High Command (*Verkhovnoe glavnokomandovanie V GK*), which provided highly centralized strategic leadership for the planning and execution of military operations. Directly subordinate to the small State Defense Committee headed by Stalin, the *Stavka* V GK included the supreme commander in chief (Stalin), the deputy supreme commander in chief (Marshal Zhukov), seven to ten other senior military leaders, and various representatives of the *Stavka* V GK, including marshals Vasilevskiy, Veronov, and Novikov, who were periodically sent to the field to coordinate multifront operations. Critical staff support for the *Stavka* was provided primarily by its "working organ," the General Staff, and by other elements of the Defense Commissariat.<sup>3</sup>

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(Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), p. 500. See also John Erickson, "The General Staff: Theory and Practice from the Tsarist to the Soviet Regime," *Soviet Military Digest*, Defence Studies, University of Edinburgh, October 1983, pp. 137-138. Ellen Jones reports that research in Eastern European sources indicates that sections of the general staffs in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary act as the secretariats for their respective Supreme Defense Councils, which were established in the 1960s. Conversation with author, October 18, 1983.

<sup>3</sup>The best Soviet descriptions of the manner in which Stalin worked with the military

### Wartime and Peacetime Operation

Most of these organs have been identified by the Soviets as wartime bodies, and many are reported to have been abolished at the end of the war.<sup>4</sup> However, various elements of the Supreme High Command may have been resurrected in peacetime over the past decade.<sup>5</sup>

The Defense Council could readily serve as a modern-day version of the State Defense Committee. As noted earlier, Leonid Brezhnev was publicly identified as the supreme commander in chief of the Soviet Armed Forces, and Gorbachev almost certainly currently occupies that post. Gorbachev, Army General D. T. Yazov, the Minister of Defense, Army General M. A. Moiseyev, the chief of the General Staff, selected members of the Collegium of the Ministry of Defense (discussed below), and perhaps a Central Committee secretary or two and the chairman of the Council of Ministers could readily be called upon to function as the *Stavka* VGK. The General Staff, with its several key staff elements and communications capabilities, appears well prepared to resume its vital planning and execution roles.

Finally, repeated recent Soviet statements regarding theaters of military operations and key personnel shifts indicate that high commands (*glavnokomandovaniya*) have already been established during peacetime in several regional TVDs along the periphery of the Soviet Union.<sup>6</sup> In wartime these high commands would operate as intermediate command

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in directing the Soviet war effort are found in the memoirs of marshals Zhukov and Vasilevskiy and General of the Army Shtemenko, all of whom played key roles in the *Stavka* or the General Staff. See Marshal G. K. Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (New York: Delacroix Press, 1971), pp. 234-268, 279-289; Marshal A. M. Vasilevskiy, *Delo vsei zhizni* (Cause of a Lifetime), (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1975), pp. 115-602; and General of the Army S. M. Shtemenko, *The General Staff in the War Years*, Books 1 and 2 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968 and 1973), *passim*.

<sup>4</sup>Such was the case for the State Defense Committee and *Stavka*, abolished on September 4, 1945. Marshal M. V. Zakharev, ed., *50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR* (50 Years of the Armed Forces of the USSR) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968), p. 477. Stalin, however, appears to have remained supreme commander in chief until his death. Christian Duevel, "Brezhnev Named Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces," Radio Liberty Research, RL260/77, November 11, 1977, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>For example, Colonel N. P. Skirido, writing in 1970, stated, "Direct leadership of the Armed Forces both in peacetime and in war is exercised by the Supreme High Command, the General Staff, and the appropriate military leadership" (emphasis added). Colonel N. P. Skirido, *The People, the Army, the Commander* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970), translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force, p. 109. Similarly, the discussion of the supreme high command in the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* notes that this organ can "sometimes exist in peacetime." "Supreme High Command," *SME*, vol. 2, p. 113.

<sup>6</sup>On TVDs, see Marshal N. V. Ogarkov, "For Our Soviet Motherland: Guarding Peaceful Labor," *Kommunist*, no. 10, 1981, p. 86.

entities between the *Stavka* of the Supreme High Command in Moscow and the various *fronts* (army groups) in the field.<sup>7</sup> All in all, the Soviets appear to be operating today with a peacetime command structure that they could rapidly and quite easily put on a wartime footing (see Figs. 1 and 2).

## MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

While the Politburo and Defense Council play critical roles in all major defense decisions, they are not involved in the myriad critical day-to-day activities of gathering and interpreting information, developing and analyzing defense policy alternatives, and implementing the courses of action selected by the senior party leadership. These activities are largely the responsibility of the various components of the Ministry of Defense, and, to a lesser degree, the scientific research institutes and industrial ministries engaged in the design and production of armaments, and a few other specialized party and government organizations.

The Ministry of Defense plays the major role in policy formulation and execution and in virtually all aspects of Soviet defense activity. Its most important elements are its collegium, the General Staff, the five services of the Soviet Armed Forces—the Strategic Rocket Forces, Air Defense Forces, Navy, Ground Forces, and Air Forces—and the main directorates (administrations), including Rear Services, Civil Defense, Armaments, Construction and Billeting, Main Inspectorate, and Cadres (Personnel).

The minister of defense, currently Army General D. T. Yazov, runs the ministry, assisted by three first deputy ministers and eleven deputy ministers. The former group consists of Army General M. A. Moiseyev, chief of the General Staff; Army General P. G. Lushev, commander in chief of the Warsaw Pact; and Army General K. A. Kochetov, who apparently supervises day-to-day administration of the ministry. The latter group includes all the service commanders in chief and the heads of the important central directorates.

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<sup>7</sup>For the best discussions of the Soviet past and present uses of high commands and theaters of military operations, see Gregory C. Baird, *Soviet Intermediary Strategic C<sup>2</sup> Entities—The Historical Experience* (McLean, Va.: BDM Corporation, April 30, 1979); Phillip A. Petersen, *The Soviet Conceptual Framework for the Development and Application of Military Power*, Defense Intelligence Report, DDB-2610-36-81 (Washington, D.C.: Defense Intelligence Agency, June 1981); and Edward L. Warner III, Josephine J. Bonan, and Erna F. Packman, *Key Personnel and Organizations of the Soviet Military High Command* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, 1987).

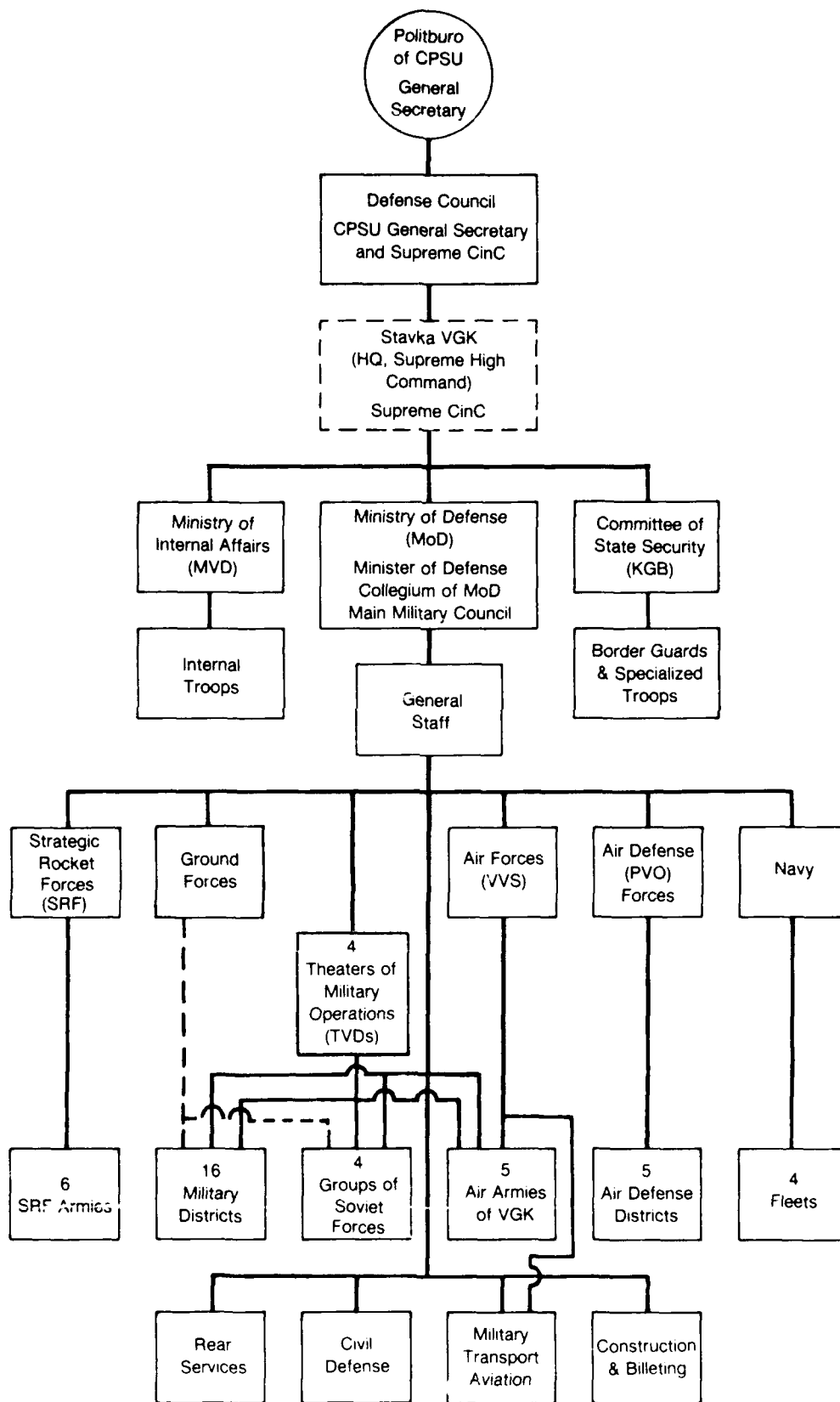


Fig. 1—Soviet peacetime organization for defense



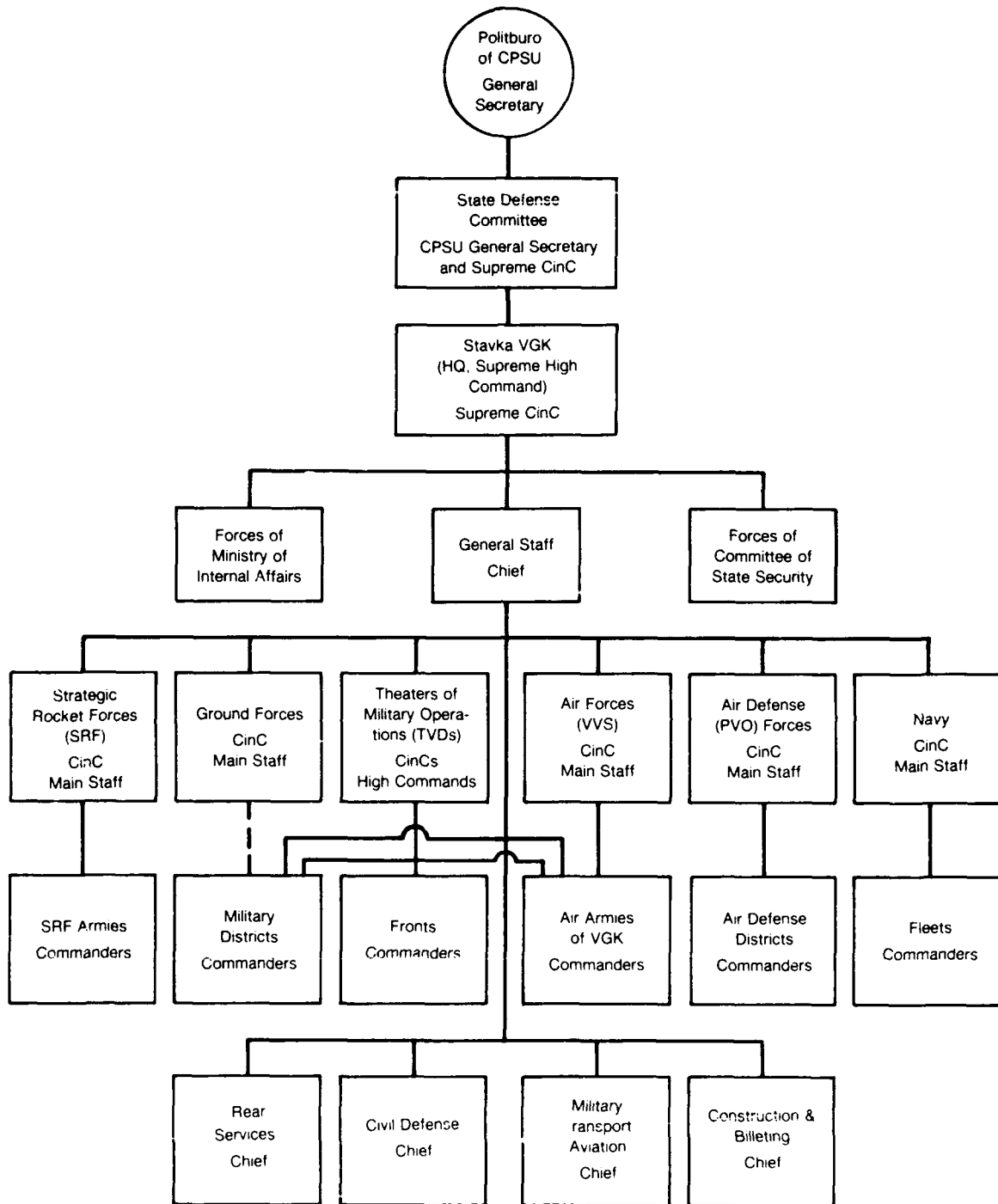


Fig. 2—Soviet wartime organization for defense

### Collegium of the Ministry of Defense

Army General Yazov, his deputies, and the chief of the Main Political Administration, Army General A. D. Lizichev, make up the Collegium of the Ministry of Defense (see Fig. 3). This collective organ is the most senior of an extensive network of military councils that are found throughout the services and the major regional commands, including the military and air defense districts, groups of forces, and fleets, discussed below. This high-level advisory body apparently serves as a forum for the discussion of key policy issues.

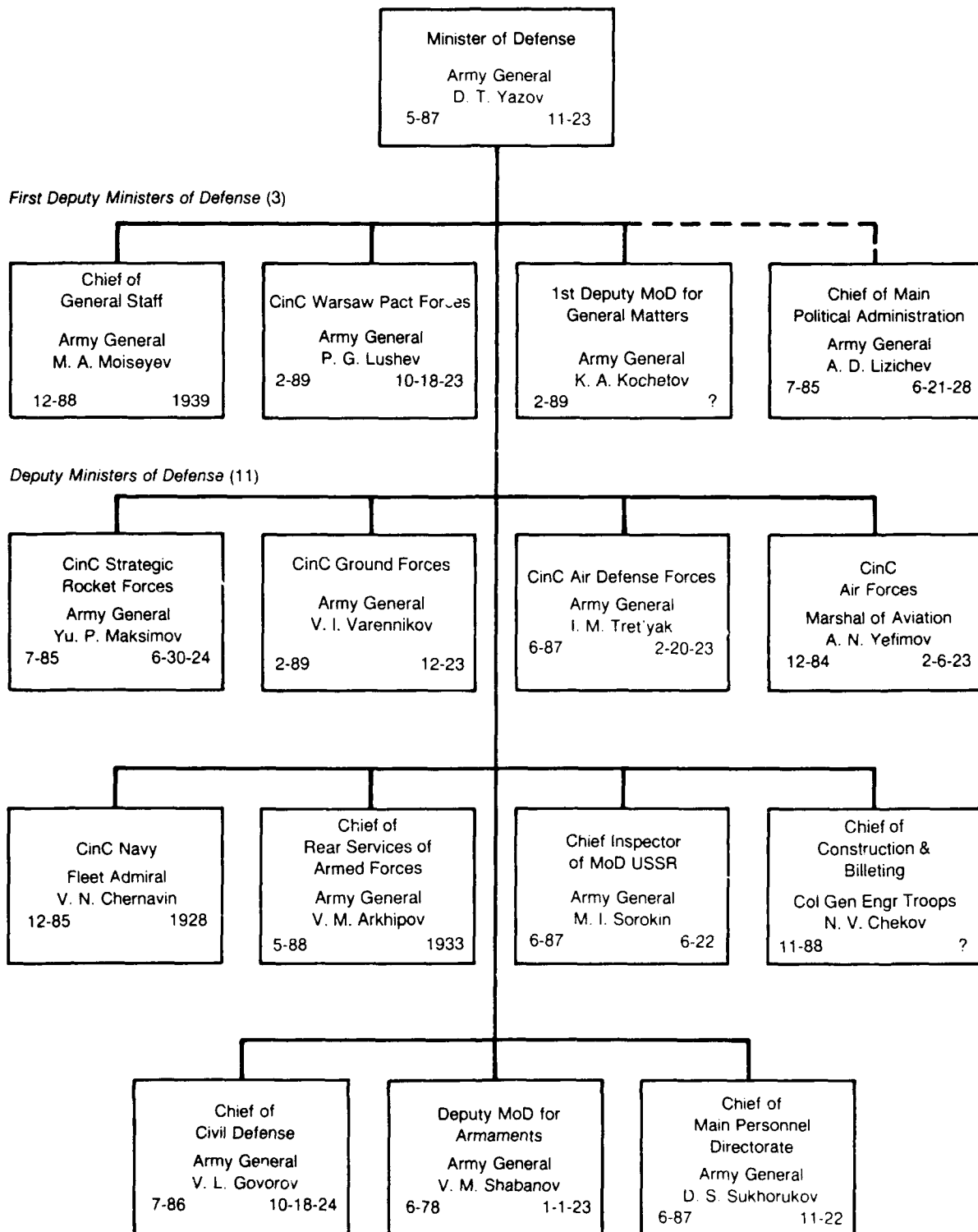
General Yazov, a career officer in his mid-60s, has served in the Soviet Army since the opening months of World War II. He was a relatively unknown but steadily rising senior commander until 1987, when he was brought from the Far East to Moscow to become the Deputy Minister of Defense for Cadres in late January. Four months later, he suddenly vaulted over several other seemingly more qualified candidates to replace Marshal Sokolov as minister of defense. Gorbachev's surprise selection of Yazov for this important post, as discussed below, suggests that he was viewed as a man who would loyally carry out Gorbachev's *perestroika* campaign to root out corruption and increase efficiency and discipline in the Soviet Armed Forces. Previous patterns suggest that Yazov will remain defense minister for the next several years.

Among the first deputy ministers, Army General P. G. Lushev, the commander in chief of the Warsaw Pact, is the most senior. Now, age 65, he rose rapidly in 1985-1986, advancing first in summer 1985 from commander of the Moscow Military District to commander in chief of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany and in July 1986 to First Deputy Minister of Defense for General Matters. He was appointed commander in chief of Warsaw Pact Forces on Marshal V. G. Kulikov's retirement in January 1989. In late 1986 and early 1987, Lushev stood in for the ailing Marshal Sokolov, then the minister of defense, leading many to believe that he was the leading candidate to succeed Sokolov. This, of course, did not occur when Sokolov was forced into retirement after the Rust affair, but General Lushev remains a powerful and vigorous figure.<sup>8</sup>

Another important figure in the senior leadership cadre of the Ministry of Defense is General of the Army A. D. Lizichev, who heads the Main Political Administration (MPA) of the Soviet Army and Navy. Although General Lizichev is neither a first deputy nor a deputy minister of defense, he is accorded the fifth-ranked protocol position in the ministry, standing behind the first deputies and ahead of the deputy ministers of defense.

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<sup>8</sup>The Rust affair and Sokolov's forced retirement are discussed under "Defense Burden and Economy" in Sec. III, above.



NOTE: Date of incumbent's appointment to post appears in lower left corner of box and his birth date in lower right corner.

Fig. 3—Collegium of Ministry of Defense USSR, April 1989

Lizichev's rank reflects the importance accorded the MPA, whose political officers, serving throughout the armed forces, are the descendants of the Bolshevik political commissars introduced immediately after the revolution. The MPA has operated since 1925 in the unique position of having "the rights of a department of the Central Committee." It is responsible for the political indoctrination of the Soviet officer corps and enlisted personnel.<sup>9</sup>

### **General Staff**

The General Staff is unquestionably the most important single element of the Soviet military establishment. Marshal Boris Shaposhnikov, one of its founders, described the General Staff as "the brain of the army."<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet General Staff directs and controls virtually all the military activities of the Soviet Armed Forces. Its many components—including the Main Operations, Main Intelligence, Main Organization and Mobilization, Main Foreign Military Assistance, and Military Science directorates—play the dominant role in such diverse undertakings as the formulation of doctrinal concepts, the refinement of Soviet military organization, the development of mobilization and military contingency plans, as well as the peacetime training and, if need be, the wartime operational direction of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The General Staff is manned by both career staff officers, many of whom spend decades in its directorates, and promising commanders drawn from the services, who usually attend the prestigious Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff in Moscow prior to their posting in the General Staff. During World War II, representatives of the General Staff were sent out to monitor the activities of the staffs of the fronts and armies in the field.<sup>11</sup> The General Staff may continue to reinforce its control during peacetime by placing its

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<sup>9</sup>Discussed in greater detail below, in this section.

<sup>10</sup>Shaposhnikov's three-volume classic, *Mozg armii* (The Brain of the Army), published in 1927-1929, a historical treatise on the role of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff prior to and during World War I, makes the case for a powerful general staff as a key element of a nation's military power. Earlier, M. V. Frunze, a leading Red Army commander during the Civil War and subsequently the people's commissar of defense, had described the staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in 1925 as the brain of the army.

<sup>11</sup>These men were members of the Corps of Officers, who represented the General Staff and operated under the control of the Operations Directorate; the Corps existed only during World War II.

representatives on the staffs of the high commands of forces, the military district, the groups of forces in Eastern Europe, and the main staffs of the five services.

### **Directorates of the Ministry of Defense**

The Ministry of Defense contains various specialized directorates, including those for Construction and Billeting, Armaments, Rear Services, Civil Defense, Cadres (Personnel), and Inspection (Main Inspectorate). Several are headed by deputy ministers of defense. We do not know a great deal about their particular defense functions.

The Armaments Directorate, headed by Army General V. M. Shabanov, manages weapons research, development, and production. The Civil Defense Directorate, led by Army General V. L. Govorov, directs the extensive national civil defense program. Soviet civil defense efforts involve not only a substantial cadre of regular troops assigned to civil defense duties but also a vast regional network that combines the efforts of local party and government organizations, economic enterprises, and educational institutions. We also know little about the relationship of these directorates to the Minister of Defense, the General Staff, or the First Deputy Minister of Defense for General Matters, who is thought to administer day-to-day operations of the ministry as a whole.

### **Services and Field Commands**

The five services carry out the peacetime training and equipping of their various subelements. The service commanders in chief (CinCs), who are deputy ministers of defense, oversee their activities. These prestigious officers are assisted by military councils, whose members include their several deputy commanders, chiefs of staff, and deputies for political affairs, as well as the main staffs of the services.

The operational responsibilities of the service CinCs and their main staffs in wartime are not clear. The headquarters of the Navy, Strategic Rocket Forces, Air Defense Troops and the Air Forces apparently would exercise operational control over all or portions of their respective forces that had not come under the direction of high commands directing operations in theaters of military operations adjacent to the USSR.

As members of the *Stavka* VGK, the service CinCs would participate in the direction of wartime combat operations. The service main staffs would probably direct continuing service training and equipping functions, provide specialized staff support to the CinCs, and, as an alternative channel of operational command and control, supplement the primary command channels run by the General Staff.

In both peace and war, most Soviet forces are deployed and directed by a series of geographically organized field commands. The intercontinental- and regional-range ballistic missiles of the Strategic Rocket Forces, for example, are deployed in several missile armies scattered throughout the USSR. The bombers, the longer-range fighter-bombers, and some fighter-interceptor units of the Air Forces are assigned to five "shock" air armies of the VGK, four headquartered in the USSR and the fifth in Legnica, Poland.<sup>12</sup>

The surface-to-air missile troops, radar troops, and interceptor aviation of the Air Defense Forces operate in a network of air defense districts throughout the USSR. The tank, motorized rifle, and airborne divisions of the ground forces and their supporting tactical air forces are controlled by the commanders of the 16 military districts into which the Soviet Union is divided (see Fig. 4), four groups of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, and an army in Mongolia.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1980s, the Soviets apparently began experimenting with their basic ground force organizational structure, and they have formed at least two unified or combined-army corps.<sup>14</sup> Some suggest that they are contemplating a shift to a battalion-brigade-corps structure along the lines of a recent reorganization of the Hungarian Armed Forces, as a means to field a leaner force for flexible, rapid maneuver warfare.<sup>15</sup> For the moment, at least, the vast majority of units of the Ground Forces continue to be structured in the traditional battalion-regiment-division pattern.

Most divisions from the military districts and groups of forces would operate in fronts created in wartime to carry the battle to the enemy in theaters of military operations around the periphery of the USSR. These fronts, consisting of some 10 to 20 divisions organized

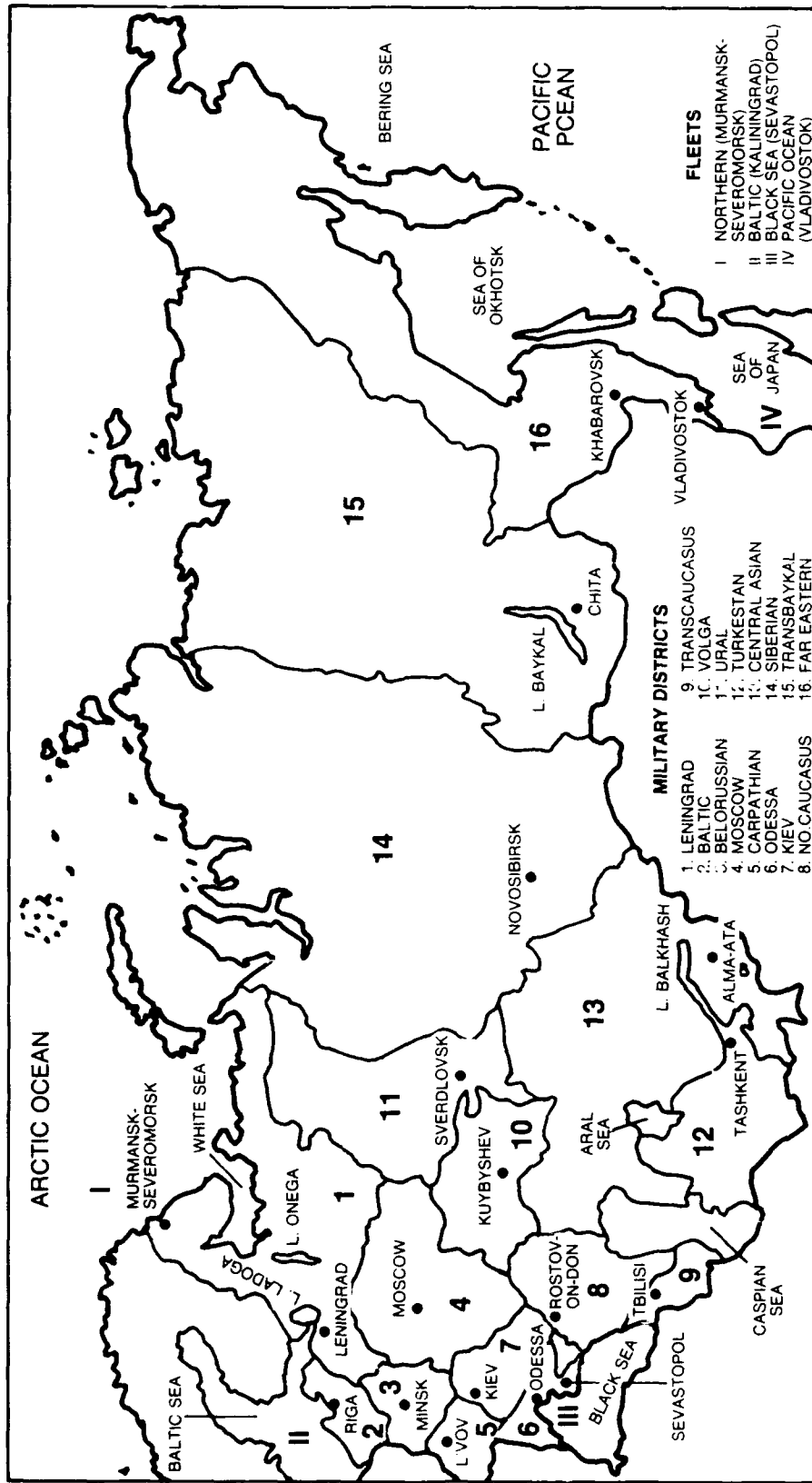
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<sup>12</sup>*Soviet Military Power, 1986* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), pp. 31, 76; Mark L. Urban, "Major Reorganization of Soviet Air Forces," *International Defense Review*, June 1983, p. 756; *The Military Balance, 1985-1986*, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup>The military districts are the Baltic, Byelorussian, Carpathian, Central Asian, Far Eastern, Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow, North Caucasus, Odessa, Siberian, Transbaikal, Transcaucasus, Turkestan, Ural, and Volga. The groups of forces are the Group of Soviet Forces Germany (GSFG) in East Germany, the Northern Group in Poland, the Central Group in Czechoslovakia, and the Southern Group in Hungary.

<sup>14</sup>See D. L. Smith and A. L. Meier, "Ogarkov's Revolution: Soviet Military Doctrine for the 1990s," *International Defense Review*, no. 1, 1987, pp. 870, 872-873, and *Soviet Military Power, 1988*, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup>Peter Weiss, "The Hungarian Armed Forces Today," *International Defense Review*, no. 8, 1988, pp. 935-938.



SOURCE: Col William F. Scott, USAF (Ret), "Soviet Aerospace Forces and Doctrine," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1975, pp. 38-39; compiled by Harriet Fast Scott.

Fig. 4—Soviet military districts and fleets

into 3 to 5 armies, would, in turn, fall under the control of high commands in the various TVDs. The high commands would carry out operations in accordance with directives from the *Stavka* VGK in Moscow operating through its working organ, the General Staff.

Over the past several years, the Soviets have organized peacetime high commands in four theaters: the Western TVD, prepared to conduct war in Central Europe; the Southwestern TVD, encompassing southern Europe from Italy to Turkey; the Southern TVD, facing Iran, Afghanistan, and South Asia down to the Persian Gulf; and the Far Eastern TVD, stretching from Central Asia to the Far East. These theater high commands apparently develop wartime contingency plans for the employment of ground and air forces drawn from nearby groups of forces and military districts, as depicted in Fig. 5.

Finally, the increasingly active Soviet Navy is divided into four widely separated fleets: the Northern, Baltic, Black Sea, and Pacific fleets, with headquarters in Severomorsk, Kaliningrad, Sevastopol', and Vladivostok, respectively.

#### **INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY**

Professional military officers of the Ministry of Defense have substantial influence in the organizational setting described here. Although top civilian organizations, such as the Politburo and the Defense Council, clearly have the right of final decision in all defense matters, the Ministry of Defense dominates the processes of national security policy formulation, analysis, and implementation.

Over the years the military's influence had been reinforced by the fact that the top-level civilian decisionmakers have no significant alternative sources of relevant defense information or expertise outside the Ministry of Defense. Consequently, even had the party leaders been inclined to pursue a defense policy at variance with that recommended by the Soviet military, they would have had considerable difficulty gathering the sensitive information or critical expertise required to develop plausible alternatives.

Reliance on the military did not, however, rule out the possibility of dynamic defense policy initiatives sponsored by leading political figures—witness the vigorous attempts of Khrushchev to radically reshape Soviet military policy between 1958 and 1964. This attempt nevertheless underscored the serious obstacles that any would-be innovator in this area, acting without the support of the Ministry of Defense, would confront.

In the Gorbachev period, this situation has changed dramatically. A group of civilian specialists on national security issues, apparently with growing ambitions to play a significant role in shaping Soviet military policy, has emerged.



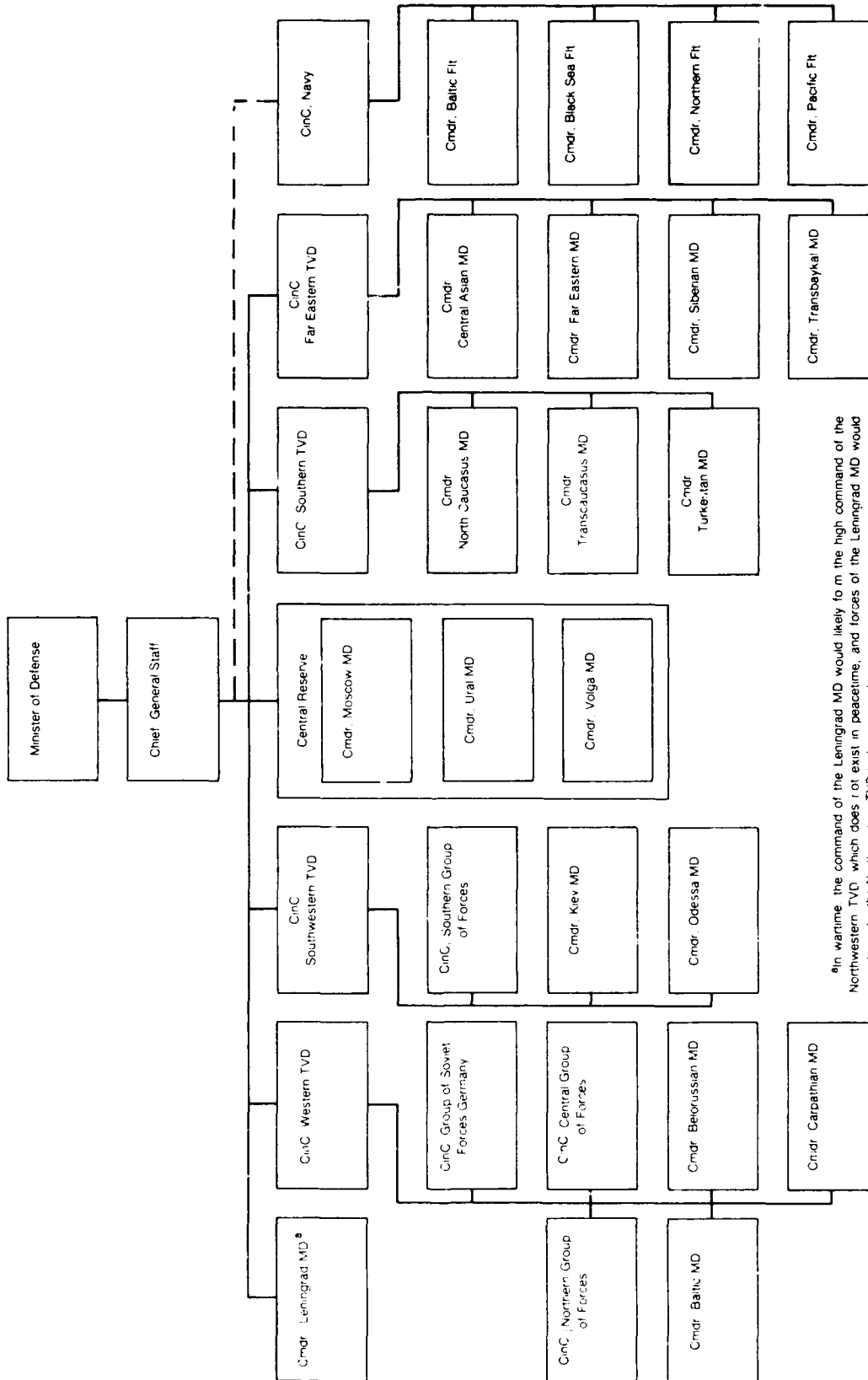


Fig. 5—Soviet regional commands

These civilians work largely within the institutes of the Academy of Sciences, in particular, its leading foreign affairs institutes in Moscow, the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), the Institute for the Study of the United States and Canada (IUSAC), and the Institute for Europe. This group includes veteran civilian physical and social scientists, foreign policy specialists, and a few retired military officers, among them Yevgeniy Primakov, Vitaliy Zhurkin, Aleksei Vasil'yev, Roald Sagdeyev, Yevgeniy Velikov, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Mikhail Mil'shteyn, Major General (Ret.) V. V. Larionov, Major General (Ret.) Vadim Makarevsky, and Colonel (Ret.) Lev Semeyko, as well as a rising new civilian generation, including Andrei Kokoshin, Aleksei Arbatov, Sergei Karaganov, Andrei Kortunov, Aleksandr Konovalov, and Igor Malashenko.

The civilians active in these efforts have acquired their expertise in contemporary defense matters largely through their involvement over the past 10 to 15 years in the study of Western defense policies and of arms control issues. Their work on the latter has increased significantly in recent years as a result of a series of studies produced first under the aegis of the Scientific Research Council on Problems of Peace and Disarmament, established in 1979, and more recently, under the Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat, formed in May 1983.

Until recently these civilian specialists concentrated on the analysis of strategic nuclear offensive and defensive forces, an area where useful analysis can be carried out without an extensive background in military affairs. They recently produced, for example, credible studies on strategic stability between the superpowers under various strategic force reduction configurations and on potential U.S.-Soviet arms interactions should the U.S. deploy a space-based ballistic missile defense system.<sup>16</sup>

During the past year they have turned their attention to the analysis of theater ground force operations as well, an area where the Soviet military has long enjoyed a monopoly of expertise.<sup>17</sup> Owing to the inherent complexities of theater warfare analysis, civilian

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<sup>16</sup>See, for example, R. Sagdeyev, A. Kokoshin, et al., *Strategic Stability Under the Conditions of Radical Nuclear Arms Reductions*, Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat, Moscow, April 1987; Ye. Velikov, R. Sagdeyev, and A. Kokoshin, *Weaponry in Space: The Dilemma of Security* (Moscow: Mir Publishers, 1986).

<sup>17</sup>See A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov, "The Battle of Kursk from the Standpoint of Defensive Doctrine," *MEMO*, no. 8, 1987, pp. 32-40; A. Kokoshin, "The Development of Military Affairs and the Reduction of the Armed Forces and Conventional Arms," *MEMO*, no. 1, January 1988, pp. 20-32; and A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov, "The Confrontations of Conventional Forces in the Context of Ensuring Strategic Stability," *MEMO*, no. 6, June 1988, pp. 23-31.

specialists will have great difficulty producing useful studies of alternative conventional force postures. The Soviet General Staff almost certainly does not look favorably upon receiving analytical assistance from a group of civilians on military operational matters, particularly those associated with theater warfare.

One should not, of course, overstate the significance of these developments. The professional military apparently continues to control detailed information on Soviet and foreign military forces and to formulate the military-technical side of Soviet military doctrine. Moreover, the General Staff reportedly provides analytical support to the Defense Council, the subcommittee of the Politburo responsible for defense matters.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev is strongly challenging prevailing security concepts and encouraging innovative thinking about these matters. Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev and Gorbachev adviser Anatoly Dobrynin have each called publicly for an increased role by civilian international affairs specialists and physical scientists in the analysis of foreign and defense matters, and a group of talented and aggressive Soviet civilian academics appears to be stepping forward to accept this challenge.<sup>18</sup>

#### **WEAPONS ACQUISITION AND DEFENSE BUDGETING**

Although the Ministry of Defense dominates the policy preparation and implementation stages in most defense-related matters, several civilian organizations outside the Ministry of Defense play active roles in these phases of Soviet weapon development and production.<sup>19</sup> The largest such organizations are the various industrial ministries engaged in defense research, development, and production.

Nine defense production ministries, whose primary products are military equipment, and several others provide important support to the armaments effort.<sup>20</sup> The many institutes of the Academy of Sciences and the research establishments of the Ministry of Defense and

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<sup>18</sup>See A. Yakovlev, "The Achievement of a Qualitatively New Condition of Soviet Society and Social Sciences," *Kommunist*, no. 8, 1987, p. 18; A. Dobrynin, "For a Nuclear-Free World Toward the 21st Century," *Kommunist*, no. 9, 1986, pp. 19, 27-28.

<sup>19</sup>For the most comprehensive and insightful account of the Soviet weapons acquisition process, see Arthur J. Alexander, *Decision-Making in Soviet Weapons Procurement*, Adelphi Papers, nos. 147 and 148, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1978/79, and David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1983, pp. 109-155.

<sup>20</sup>The nine defense production ministries and their primary products are the Ministry of Defense Industry, conventional weapons; the Ministry of Aviation Industry, aircraft and cruise missiles; the Ministry of Shipbuilding Industry, ships and submarines; the Ministry of Electronics Industry, electronic components; the Ministry of Radio Industry, electronic products; the Ministry of Medium Machine Building, nuclear weapons; the Ministry of General Machine Building, ballistic missiles; the Ministry of Machine Building, ammunition; and the Ministry of Communication Equipment Industry, telecommunication equipment.

the defense production ministries conduct most of the basic research in defense-related technologies.

The relations between these defense research and production organizations and the Ministry of Defense have been traditionally supervised by the Military-Industrial Commission (VPK) on the government side and by a CPSU secretary specializing in defense production. The occupant of the latter position—possibly still L. N. Zaikov, despite the fact he became the head of the Moscow party organization in November 1987—has long played, with the help of the Defense Industries Department of the CPSU Central Committee, a critical role in personally directing Soviet defense production.<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet defense establishment, like all of the Soviet system, operates within the confines of both the most recent five-year and annual economic plans for defense. These plans are formulated by the Ministry of Defense and by the key defense production ministries with the assistance of the Military-Industrial Commission, the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), and the CPSU Secretariat. In the Ministry of Defense, defense budget plans are apparently prepared by the General Staff, which must reconcile the budgetary requests of the services and the other elements of the Soviet Armed Forces.

Given the generous support that defense spending has generally received since the fall of Khrushchev, the preparation of the budget is unlikely to have been a particularly difficult task, even in recent years, when the growth rate of the defense budget slowed considerably. Just a few years earlier, however, when Khrushchev was determinedly seeking to reduce defense expenditures, this process was almost certainly accompanied by significant interservice conflict in a scarcity environment. In the wake of Gorbachev's announced intention to cut defense spending by 14 percent in 1989-1990, intensified interservice competition will almost certainly emerge once again. Major General Yuri Lebedev, who serves on the General Staff, asserted in May 1989 that precisely that has begun to occur.<sup>22</sup>

After preparation and coordination by the responsible party and government agencies, the annual and five-year defense plans must be considered and approved by the Defense Council and ultimately by the Politburo. The pattern of steadily increasing defense budgets has persisted from the mid-1960s through 1988 despite substantial Soviet economic difficulties, including a significant decline in the rate of overall economic growth.

<sup>21</sup>Others who have occupied this post include Leonid Brezhnev in the late 1950s and D. F. Ustinov, who held the job from 1965 until 1976 before becoming the minister of defense.

<sup>22</sup>See George C. Wilson, "Soviet General Says He Dreams of End to Arms Race, More Freedom for Citizens," *Washington Post*, May 9, 1989, p. 11.

In marked contrast to the situation in the Western democracies, to date there has been no meaningful legislative review of the Soviet defense budget or, for that matter, any other aspect of Soviet political life. Although the Supreme Soviet is, in theory, the dominant element in the Soviet parliamentary system, in the past it has not influenced defense (or other) issues. Thus, the Soviet defense budget has been purely the product of politics within the government and party hierarchies.

The Soviets have just amended their constitution, however, to establish a new Congress of People's Deputies, whose 2250 deputies will normally meet only once a year. The Congress will, however, elect a 542-member Supreme Soviet of the USSR from among its members. This body will be in session for seven to eight months each year and will handle day-to-day legislative business.

Reportedly, the new Supreme Soviet will establish standing committees to monitor, among other things, Soviet defense and foreign policy. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze specifically called for such legislative oversight in July 1988.<sup>23</sup> This new Supreme Soviet will have the potential for the first time to provide meaningful legislative review of the Soviet defense budget and of many other aspects of the Soviet defense effort. It will remain to be seen if this proves to be the case.

#### **EFFECT OF CIVILIAN LEADER'S PERSONALITY**

Thanks to the extreme centralization of political power in the Soviet system, a few key leaders have controlled the political process and, consequently, defense policy. Joseph Stalin extended his domination of Soviet politics into defense matters, where he personally directed the weapons acquisition process and, during World War II, supervised Soviet military operations against Nazi Germany and imperial Japan from Moscow. After World War II, he pushed for the acquisition of nuclear weapons and modern delivery systems while insisting on the glorification of his own doctrinal insights gleaned from the war.

Khrushchev's personal preferences and style achieved similar importance once he had firmly established his political preeminence. His outspoken support of heavy industry and defense spending (in contrast to Malenkov's incipient consumerism) and his personal links with several senior military commanders with whom he had worked closely while serving as a senior political commissar at the front during World War II critically aided his rise to power between 1953 and 1957.

<sup>23</sup> "19th All-Union CPSU Conference: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy," *Pravda*, July 26, 1988.

Nevertheless, from the late 1950s until his ouster in October 1964, Khrushchev engaged in a determined effort to reshape Soviet military strategy and force posture in conformance with his personal views on the dominant role of nuclear-armed missiles, the decreased requirements for large theater ground and air forces, the uselessness of large naval combatants, and, in general, the need to reduce inherently "wasteful and unproductive" defense expenditures.<sup>24</sup> Only the determined opposition of the professional military and their like-minded civilian "metal eaters" (as Khrushchev called them) kept him from achieving his major objectives. Yet his defense policy initiatives have had a lasting effect on Soviet force posture and military doctrine.

Brezhnev's personal influence on defense policy was less evident. He was obviously proud of his accomplishments as a political commissar during World War II, when he rose to the rank of major general and saw extensive combat along the southern front. During his final years, Brezhnev increasingly sought public recognition for his alleged military prowess by having himself awarded the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union and being publicly identified as the supreme commander in chief of the armed forces and chairman of the Defense Council.

Brezhnev's "Tula line" heralded a new public emphasis on the nonthreatening nature of Soviet military objectives. Nevertheless, he allowed the military to develop new operational concepts and organizational arrangements for theater warfare and consistently supported an across-the-board expansion of Soviet military policy, although this support became less generous in the last several years of his rule.

Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary with little experience regarding defense issues. Too young to have served in World War II and having spent much of his career first as a regional party leader and then as the Central Committee secretary for agriculture, his exposure to military issues did not begin until he joined the Defense Council after Brezhnev's death in November 1982. Since that time, however, and particularly after becoming the general secretary in February 1985, Gorbachev has immersed himself in the full range of defense matters. The many chiefs of the top of the military high command since 1985 have enabled him to replace senior military commanders with his own team in the Ministry of Defense.

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<sup>24</sup>For discussions of Khrushchev's style and beliefs regarding defense issues, see Warner, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics*, pp. 137-146, and Khrushchev's memoirs, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), pp. 18-22, 25-26, 40-42, 46, 50, 540.

In the process of his multifaceted *perestroika* of virtually all aspects of the Soviet political and economic system, designed to shake the Soviet people out of their lethargic ways, the dynamic Gorbachev has not spared the military. Moreover, with the assistance of some of his key advisers, he has forcefully reasserted the party's control of defense matters and openly encouraged a significantly broadened internal dialogue on the fundamental directions of Soviet foreign and national security policy.

Under Brezhnev, the Ministry of Defense controlled almost exclusively the processes of establishing basic security objectives, assessing external threats, elaborating doctrinal concepts, defining military requirements, developing force programs, and assessing their relative effectiveness. By raising questions about basic national security assumptions and sponsoring a far-reaching debate about crucial aspects of Soviet defense policy under the banners of "new political thinking" and "reasonable sufficiency"—a debate whose participants include for the first time a group of civilian academics as well as the usual military professionals—Gorbachev is, in Stephen Meyer's phrase, moving to recapture control of the national security agenda.<sup>25</sup>

Gorbachev's new approach includes an ambitious arms control agenda, involving both highly utopian elements and more pragmatic dimensions, which could fundamentally challenge the military's long-established views on defense matters. The extraordinary negotiating role played by Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, then chief of the General Staff, during the Reagan-Gorbachev "presummit" in Reykjavik in October 1986 indicated that at least with regard to several of the critical issues of deep reductions in nuclear strike systems, Gorbachev appeared to have succeeded in gaining the support of the professional military in this undertaking. The dynamic Gorbachev is likely to be challenged to maintain the military's support if he pushes the more visionary elements of his arms control agenda. He has suggested very deep reductions and a radical reshaping of Soviet nuclear and conventional forces. At the same time, he is proceeding with his program for economic revitalization, which compels him to continue to limit the growth of, or possibly even cut back, the defense budget.

The top military leaders have had little choice but to adjust, first, to reduced growth in the defense budget in the late 1970s and most of the 1980s, to the burgeoning discussion of the most fundamental issues of Soviet defense policy, and finally, to Gorbachev's unilateral force reductions and substantial cuts in the defense budget. The pressures generated by the

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<sup>25</sup>Stephen M. Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," *International Security*, Fall 1988, p. 124.

fundamental systemic crisis facing the Soviet system and Gorbachev's apparent determination to sponsor significant innovation in Soviet arms control and defense policy are such that the military will be hard pressed to protect its institutional interests and privileges.



## V. RECURRING ISSUES

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The Soviet military is a significant element not only in the bureaucratic struggles of Soviet politics but also in the broader aspects of Soviet life. Thanks to its near monopoly of relevant information and expertise until very recently, the military has long wielded substantial influence on the development and implementation of Soviet defense policy. The sheer size of the Soviet defense effort, in terms of the personnel involved, its far-flung activities, and its vast expenditures, endows the Soviet military establishment with multiple direct and indirect effects beyond the sphere of defense-related activities.

#### **Civilian Control of Military**

Despite the importance of its contribution to the system, the Soviet military has consistently operated under firm civilian control exerted by the senior Communist Party leadership. This subordinate position has repeatedly been demonstrated when the civilian leaders have preemptively removed the most senior military figures, including Marshal Tukhachevskiy (1937) and several others who were executed in Stalin's deadly purges of the late 1930s, Marshal Zhukov (1957), Marshal Zakharov (1963), Marshal Ogarkov (1984), and Marshal Sokolov (1987) at times when their performance was deemed unacceptable or possibly politically threatening.

Most recently, as noted above, the Soviet military has come under substantial public criticism as Gorbachev's generalized *perestroika* assault on Soviet society has gathered momentum. This campaign had become increasingly evident in the early months of 1987 and was accelerated significantly following the embarrassing flight of the young German, Rust, and his spectacular landing in front of the Kremlin in May of that year. A spate of articles has indicated that the military is in the midst of a process of intensive internal and external criticism. In the words of one veteran Western observer: "At no other time since the era of Khrushchev a generation earlier, have the political clout, the visibility and the prestige of the armed forces been as low as today."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Seweryn Bialer, "The Changing Soviet Political System: The Nineteenth Party Conference and After," unpublished paper, September 1988, p. 4.

The military leadership, led by Army General Yazov, have spoken self-critically about the poor state of discipline, training, and combat readiness in the Soviet Armed Forces. The marked increase in such criticism that occurred following the Central Committee plenum in January 1987 has continued. The performance of the officer corps in particular has been strongly condemned by senior military and civilian spokesmen alike. The officers are being called upon to abandon arrogant behavior, "cronyism," and empty "formalistic" approaches to training. They are being exhorted to exhibit instead increased personal responsibility, "exactingness," realistic training, and a genuine concern for the welfare of their men.

The party leadership has continued, nevertheless, to find it advantageous to encourage the military to play a major role in the indoctrination of Soviet youth prior to their conscription into the armed forces. The Ministry of Defense helps conduct an extensive "military-patriotic education" campaign directed at Soviet young people; it is also involved in the many paramilitary activities of the Volunteer Society for the Support of the Army, Air Force, and Navy (DOSAAF), and the compulsory civil defense and preinduction training programs conducted within the school system.<sup>2</sup> All of these efforts, although they involve a wide range of party and government organizations, are directed and actively supported by the Ministry of Defense.

While most such programs had existed since the 1920s, they expanded significantly in the late 1960s. At that time, the party and the military appeared to have struck a bargain that brought an expansion of the military-patriotic education effort and the initiation of compulsory preinduction training programs in exchange for military acquiescence to a one-year reduction in the compulsory service obligation of Soviet conscripts.

These extensive programs, which persist today, reflect the genuine community of interest between the senior party and military leaderships. Both groups are determined to do all they can to foster intense patriotic commitment to the nation, a proper Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, a sense of discipline, and basic military skills among Soviet youth. Their aims in this regard are probably intensified by their common perceptions of the need to combat vigorously the antimilitary and apolitical attitudes that have emerged among Soviet urban youth in the past several years.

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<sup>2</sup>For descriptions of these programs, see Herbert Goldhamer, *The Soviet Soldier: Soviet Military Management at the Troop Level* (New York: Crane & Russak, 1975), pp. 39-88.

While the military has considerable influence on the Soviet domestic scene because of the budgetary priority accorded its substantial armament programs and its broader defense preparedness activities, the military leadership does not appear to play a direct role in shaping Soviet domestic policies beyond the defense sphere. Senior defense figures, including recent defense ministers Sokolov and Yazov, infrequently comment publicly on nondefense matters. Yazov's presence in the Politburo, albeit as a candidate rather than full member, provides an opportunity for the minister of defense to be heard in critical deliberations on the full range of domestic issues.

Nevertheless, we have little reason to believe that the military plays a leading role in the formulation, analysis, decision, or implementation of policies with regard to such matters as economic reform, agricultural policy, or cultural policy. Its low profile in this regard reflects a well-established tradition that allows it significant participation and influence in defense matters directly affecting its corporate interests while discouraging its involvement in broader issues.

The Soviet regime reinforces this pattern by providing significant benefits to the Soviet officer corps in the form of generous pay, personal security, high status, and substantial career mobility opportunities, as well as unstinting support of the nation's defense efforts. One student of Soviet politics has argued that the military's lack of involvement in broader societal issues is further reinforced by the fact that, despite its presence in garrisons, bases, and headquarters throughout the country, the military is largely a self-sufficient organization that has only minimal ties with the local community or with regional government and party organizations.<sup>3</sup>

The military profession has traditionally enjoyed a good reputation in Soviet society. In the wake of World War II, the general public held the Soviet officer corps in especially high repute in recognition of its victory over the Nazi invaders. By the mid-1960s, two opinion surveys of Soviet secondary school students and teachers indicated that the military officer career ranked at approximately the 25 percent point in terms of attractiveness among a wide range of occupations evaluated.<sup>4</sup>

Over the past two decades, however, the standing of the Soviet military appears to have declined substantially, almost certainly as a result of the spread of antimilitary attitudes among the urbanized segments of Soviet youth. This undesirable trend has prompted the

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<sup>3</sup>Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority*, pp. 254-255, 284.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 264, 267.

Soviet military leadership to complain bitterly and to devote substantial efforts to propagating a positive view of the role of the armed forces in the Soviet system.<sup>5</sup>

### **Main Political Administration**

Any review of Soviet civil-military relations must include a discussion of the activities of the Main Political Administration. In the first years of Soviet rule, the political commissars of the MPA were assigned two important tasks: monitoring the political reliability of the officer corps, many of whom had served in the Russian imperial army, and indoctrinating both enlisted men and officers with the proper communist outlook. Within the first decade, a third task was added: the political officers came to share the responsibilities of the military commanders for the combat readiness and military discipline of their units.<sup>6</sup>

Over the years, the watchdog function of the political officers has declined considerably. This task has fallen largely to the so-called special sections of the KGB, which use a network of KGB officers and their informers recruited throughout the armed forces to guard against espionage and anti-Soviet activity within the military. Rather than serving as an outside agency checking on the military, the MPA now constitutes an integral part of the Soviet military establishment.

Political officers today are, in their own right, career military professionals who have chosen to pursue the indoctrinational and organizational specialities of the MPA. Their professional military orientation is reflected in the patterns of political officer recruitment. For several decades, the majority of young political officers has been drawn from the ranks of junior officers in the combat services. Since 1971, new political officers have also been supplied each year by the graduating classes of the MPA's seven higher military commissioning schools first opened in 1967.

Although the political officers are career military professionals, they may occasionally find themselves in conflict with their line officer compatriots. The commanders and their political deputies, the *zampolit*, share mutual interests in having units that are well trained, disciplined, and properly politically indoctrinated. Nevertheless, there is bound to be periodic conflict between the commanders and the political officers over a scarce commodity: the training time of the personnel that both commanders and *zampolit* seek to utilize.

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<sup>5</sup>Warner, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics*, pp. 100-102.

<sup>6</sup>Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority*, pp. 35-44, and E. H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924-1926*, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 432-433.

The political officers must attend to a host of duties: the conduct of political education for all personnel, the maintenance of morale and discipline, care for individual welfare, the encouragement of technical competence, and the supervision of the party and Komsomol organizations throughout the armed forces. Although the commanders probably support many of these activities, the time required to do all of them may well impinge on the time the commanders would like to devote to improving the military skills and combat readiness of their forces. Consequently, some friction between commanders and present-day commissars is likely, but it is relatively unimportant and far different from the model of intense party-military conflict between two strongly opposed entities that has sometimes been depicted.<sup>7</sup>

### **Military-Political Friendships**

Finally, Soviet civil-military relations have often included the important element of personal ties between important civilian figures and the senior military leadership. During wartime, in particular, party politicians have often found themselves in close contact with key military commanders, and political alliances have sometimes emerged. Such was the case for both Stalin and Khrushchev, who developed lasting patronage ties with military officers during the defense of the same city, called first Tsaritsyn, then Stalingrad, during the Civil War and World War II, respectively.<sup>8</sup> Over 40 years after the end of World War II, such wartime clusterings have lost their significance.

One might expect similar, but somewhat weaker, alliances to emerge in peacetime between regional party secretaries and the commanders of the military districts. Regional party secretaries are, in fact, members of the military councils of these military districts; yet if Colton is right about the largely autarkic tendencies of the military units, the party-military contacts in the field have little significance.

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<sup>7</sup>The most prominent advocate of this view has been Roman Kolkowicz, whose most detailed presentation is found in *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>8</sup>Stalin's "Tsaritsyn group" included K. E. Voroshilov, S. K. Timoshenko, and S. M. Budenny of the famous First Cavalry Army, all of whom became marshals of the Soviet Union under Stalin's sponsorship. Khrushchev's comrades in arms at Stalingrad included marshals V. I. Chuikov, S. S. Biriuzov, and K. Ya. Malinovskiy, all of whom rose to key posts in the Ministry of Defense while Khrushchev dominated Soviet politics in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Personal contacts between senior civilians and key military officers are likely to occur more often and to be more substantive—and thus more important—in Moscow. Several memoir accounts testify to the existence of close party-military working relationships in Moscow, where the senior military leaders promote their corporate and individual views on defense matters in routine contacts with key party and government officials.<sup>9</sup>

Western speculations regarding Marshal Ogarkov's somewhat surprising selection as chief of the General Staff in January 1977, for example, often centered on the respect that Defense Minister Ustinov reportedly developed for him during their joint involvement in Soviet policymaking regarding the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks during the previous several years. Yet a few years later, Ogarkov and Ustinov sharply disagreed in public on several issues and eventually Ogarkov was ousted as chief of the General Staff, almost certainly to prevent his succeeding the ailing Ustinov, who died a few months later.

Most recently, Gorbachev's rather surprising choice of Army General Yazov to succeed Marshal Sokolov as Minister of Defense in May 1987 appears to have had an intriguing personal patronage dimension. Yazov had become the Deputy Minister of Defense for Cadres in early 1987. *Krasnaya zvezda* revealed on January 15, 1987, that Yazov, then the commander of the Far East Military District, had spoken bluntly of shortcomings in military discipline in his command during a large meeting of military officers with Gorbachev, when the latter had visited the Far East the previous summer.

Thus, Yazov's initial move to Moscow and subsequent selection to replace Marshal Sokolov appears to have resulted from his having strongly impressed Gorbachev that he was the right man to lead a vigorous "restructuring" of the Ministry of Defense during this serendipitous meeting. One cannot foretell whether this apparent patronage relationship will tie Yazov firmly to Gorbachev in the face of what will almost certainly be substantial strains over decisions regarding resource allocation, force posture, and arms control policy.

## WEAPONS ACQUISITION AND FORCE POSTURE

Over the past six decades, the Soviets have built up a well-entrenched military-industrial complex to research, develop, and produce armaments. The complex includes research institutes, weapons design bureaus, and series-production facilities, as well as a

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<sup>9</sup>See *Khrushchev Remembers*; Marshal G. K. Zhukov, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*; Gen. S. M. Shtemenko, *The General Staff in the War Years*, Books 1 and 2; and S. Bialer, ed., *Stalin and His Generals: Soviet Military Memoirs of World War II* (New York: Pegasus, 1969).

group of military, government, and party bodies that help manage various phases of the weapons acquisition process.<sup>10</sup>

The dynamics of Soviet weapons acquisition includes a mixture of "demand-pull" and "design-push" developments. In the former case, the design and production organs of the defense industrial ministries develop and produce weapons in response to the specifications established by the Soviet Armed Forces to provide the capabilities needed to meet the operational requirements of Soviet military doctrine. Clear evidence of "design push" emerges where armaments are produced as a result of the entrepreneurial initiatives of the major designers who "sell" their latest weapons ideas to their military customers and key political leaders.

Over the years, well-established patterns of weapons development have evolved. These include widespread competition between two or more design bureaus that extends through the testing of full-scale prototypes; simplicity in the use of austere, uncomplicated, and frequently crudely finished subsystems; and significant conservatism in the development of new weapons, manifested in the high degree of design inheritance from one generation of weapons to another and in the frequent use of proven components and incremental changes in design when such changes are made.<sup>11</sup> This general pattern has not, however, kept the Soviets from making significant innovations, as occurred in the 1980s with the development and deployment of the MiG-29 Fulcrum fighter-interceptor and the family of modern air- and sea-launched cruise missiles.

The nine ministries predominantly engaged in weapons production represent the most privileged sector of the Soviet economy. They have traditionally obtained the most advanced equipment, the most talented scientific and technical personnel, priority access to scarce resources, and high status, high pay, and other material benefits for their employees. Many of the key participants in Soviet weapons development and production, including the leading designers, industrial ministers, and party and government overseers, have spent

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<sup>10</sup>Western scholarship regarding the dynamics of Soviet weapons acquisition has increased substantially in recent years; see Arthur J. Alexander's "Weapons Acquisition in the Soviet Union, United States and France," in *Comparative Defense Policy*, Horton, Rogerson, and Warner, eds., pp. 426-444; and Alexander's *Decision-Making in Soviet Weapons Procurement*; David Holloway, "Technology and Political Decision in Soviet Armaments Policy," *Journal of Peace Research*, no. 4, 1976; John McConnell, "The Soviet Defense Industry As a Pressure Group," in *Soviet Naval Policy*, M. McGwire, K. Booth, and J. McConnell, eds. (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 91-101; and Berman and Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces*, pp. 74-84.

<sup>11</sup>Alexander, "Weapons Acquisition," pp. 430-431; also Alexander, *Decision-Making in Soviet Weapons Procurement*, pp. 33, 34, 41.

decades in their senior posts, thus adding important elements of close personal ties, extensive experience, and continuity to the acquisition process.

The design and production facilities of the defense production ministries and their military customers are linked in several ways. One of the most important of these is the strict quality control of defense-related products enforced by the military representatives from the weapons directorates of the services, who are attached to each major production plant and design bureau.<sup>12</sup>

The systems that emerge from the weapons acquisition process represent a major input into the aggregate of military capabilities fielded by the Soviet Union. Consequently, the size and quality of this force posture reflect both the predominant design practices that characterize Soviet weapons development and acquisition and the considerable political clout of the Soviet military-industrial complex.

Other factors that influence the character of Soviet force posture include the views of the political and military leadership regarding the threats and opportunities facing the Soviet Union, their judgments regarding the most effective military force deployments to respond to this environment, and the tenets of Soviet military doctrine that help guide the Ministry of Defense, particularly the General Staff, in establishing requirements for both the production and the possible employment of specific military capabilities.

## STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES

Since entering the nuclear age in 1949, the Soviets have consistently striven to develop and deploy offensive and defensive forces that could add nuclear muscle to their military power and reduce the damage any adversary might inflict on the USSR in the event of war. In the course of three decades, they have deployed a full spectrum of nuclear weapons with virtually all of their forces, ranging from various tactical weapons deployed with the Navy, ground, and air forces to the multimegaton warheads associated with their very large intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In the process of achieving a nuclear capability, the Soviets have established two new military services: the National Air Defense Forces (*Protivovozdushnaia oborona* [PVO] *Strany*), created in 1948 and renamed the Air Defense Forces (*Voiska PVO*) in the late 1970s, and the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF), created in 1959. The primary wartime mission of the PVO Forces would be to defend against bomber and missile attacks; that of the SRF, to mount theater and intercontinental strikes with strategic nuclear missiles.

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<sup>12</sup>Robert Kaiser emphasizes the critical *quality control* function performed by these military representatives in his *Russia*, pp. 378-383.



### ICBMs, SLBMs, and MIRVs

Soviet strategic offensive nuclear strike capabilities of the late 1980s include both regional and intercontinental-range components. In both cases, these capabilities include a mix of land-based ballistic missiles under the control of the SRF, submarine-borne missiles of the Navy, and strategic bombers of the Air Forces' "shock" air armies of the Supreme High Command.

The elements of the Soviet strategic triad do not contribute equally to Soviet nuclear strike capabilities. The ICBM component, including the third-generation SS-11s and SS-13s, the fourth-generation SS-17s, SS-18s, and SS-19s, and fifth-generation mobile SS-24s and SS-25s, provides 60 percent of the Soviet Union's approximately 10,900 intercontinental-range weapons, thus making it the predominant element among the so-called central strategic forces.

The SLBMs of the Yankee, Delta, and Typhoon class nuclear-powered submarines armed with the SS-N-6, SS-N-8, SS-N-18, SS-N-20, and SS-N-23 missiles account for some 31 percent of the intercontinental-range warheads, while the Air Forces' Bear bombers provide the remaining 9 percent of these weapons. The Badgers, Blinders, and Backfires of the Soviet Air Forces and Soviet Naval Aviation account for 71 percent of the regional strategic strike forces, while the SRF's intermediate- and medium-range ballistic missiles, the older SS-4s and newer, mobile SS-20s, provide 28 percent, and the Golf-class submarines carrying the SS-N-5 provide the remaining one percent.<sup>13</sup>

Over the years, the Soviets have steadily sought to improve both the survivability and the attack effectiveness of their strategic nuclear forces. The quest for survivability has led them to deploy their land-based missiles in successive generations of increasingly harder, reinforced concrete silos, and in the case of their intermediate-range SS-20s and intercontinental-range SS-25s in road-mobile configurations.

The Soviets have also developed the SS-24 ICBM carrying up to ten multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), which they began to deploy in a rail-mobile configuration beginning in fall 1987. They have also deployed their SLBMs on "quiet" submarines that are increasingly difficult to detect acoustically. In the same vein, they have sought to provide a highly survivable command and control apparatus to direct

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<sup>13</sup>Percentages are based on data from the International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, pp. 33, 34; *Soviet Military Power, 1988*, pp. 15, 45-51; and William Arkin et al., *Nuclear Weapons Databook: Volume IV, Soviet Nuclear Weapons*, National Resources Defense Council, forthcoming.

these forces by deploying a host of hardened command bunkers, mobile truckborne, airborne, and trainborne command posts, and highly redundant communications facilities.

The quest for improved military effectiveness in the strategic missile force has concentrated on efforts to increase the numbers of warheads carried by these missiles and to improve weapon accuracy. To this end, the Soviets have deployed increasingly accurate MIRVs on both ICBMs and SLBMs, a process that began in the mid-1970s.

The Soviets' practice of developing and deploying large, heavy-payload strategic missiles, a tradition that dates back to the earliest days of Soviet missile development, has contributed significantly to the MIRV program. In the 1950s, the Soviets were forced to develop large rocket boosters for their military and space programs in order to compensate for their relative backwardness in both nuclear weapons design and electronics miniaturization. They continued this pattern in the 1960s, developing ICBMs as large as the "heavy" SS-9, which carried either a single, multimegaton warhead or a "triplet" consisting of three reentry vehicles (RVs) dispensed in a cluster without an independent targeting capability for the individual RVs. When they finally developed MIRVs in the 1970s, they were able to take advantage of the high payload capacity, or throwweight, of their fourth-generation ICBMs, in particular the massive SS-18 and the SS-19, which carry up to ten and six MIRVs, respectively.

At the same time that they were rapidly expanding their ICBM-borne weapons inventory, the Soviets made major improvements in the accuracy of these weapons. By the late 1970s, they had acquired the capability to place at risk a substantial share of hardened U.S. military facilities, the most numerous of which were the fixed silos housing the Minuteman ICBMs. Thus, by 1980, the Soviets were rapidly achieving one of their highest priority doctrinal objectives, the ability to attack effectively the ICBM component of the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal.<sup>14</sup>

As the USSR enters the late 1980s, its ICBM force consists of 1414 missiles: 420 SS-11s, 60 SS-13s, and 126 SS-25s (all carrying single RV equivalents); 130 SS-17s (four RVs); 308 SS-18s (up to ten RVs); 350 SS-19s (up to six RVs); and 20 SS-24s (ten RVs).<sup>15</sup> Continuing deployments of the new SS-24 and SS-25 missiles, as well as the anticipated

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<sup>14</sup>The Soviets probably sought to achieve this objective, at least partially, with their third-generation ICBMs by targeting the powerful warheads of the relatively inaccurate SS-9 against the Minuteman launch control centers. The United States countered this possible tactic in the late 1960s by deploying launch control aircraft that can be kept on continuous airborne alert. Berman and Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces*, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup>Arkin et al., *Nuclear Weapons Databook: Volume IV*.

introduction of the SS-18 follow-on, which may be even more powerful than the SS-18, will further enhance Soviet ICBM capabilities.

The ultimate size of the Soviet ICBM force in the 1990s will depend critically on possible arms control constraints. The new generation mobiles could simply be added to the existing forces or could substitute for current silo-based systems within reduced overall ceilings, should such limits eventually emerge from the Geneva negotiations.

### **Submarine-Launch Capabilities**

Over the years the Soviets have produced several combinations of ballistic missiles and missile-carrying submarines. These include the deployment of 350-mile-range SS-N-4 on the diesel-powered Z-V-class submarines and the SS-N-4 and SS-N-5 on the diesel-powered Golf- and Hotel-class submarines deployed in the 1950s; the deployment in the late 1960s and early 1970s of the numerous Yankee-class nuclear submarines (SSBNs) carrying the 1750- to 2000-mile-range SS-N-6; the addition of the Delta I and Delta II submarines with the 4800-mile-range SS-N-8 in the middle-to-late 1970s; the deployment of the Delta III SSBNs with the over-5000-mile-range SS-N-18, which carries three or seven MIRVs in the late 1970s and early 1980s; and finally, in the mid-1980s the deployment of the Delta IV submarines with the long-range SS-N-23 carrying four to ten MIRVs, and the Typhoon-class SSBNs with the similarly long-range SS-N-20 with its six to ten MIRVs.<sup>16</sup>

For a variety of geographic, technological, and logistic reasons, the Soviets have consistently deployed only a small portion of their SSBN force on peacetime patrols at sea where they are capable of launching strikes on short notice against the United States. They maintain an at-sea, day-to-day alert rate of approximately 20 percent of their SSBN force.<sup>17</sup>

The Soviets apparently continue to count on a period of heightened tensions preceding any major conflict that will allow them to deploy rapidly from their Northern Fleet and Pacific Fleet home ports the considerable number of SSBNs that remain in port but are not undergoing major refit overhaul. The long range of the SS-N-8, SS-N-18, SS-N-20, and SS-N-23, which allows them to cover targets in the United States from waters near their home ports, gives added credibility to this strategy. However, barring such a force generation in crisis, the majority of Soviet strategic missile submarines are routinely tied up in port and thus highly vulnerable.

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<sup>16</sup>Berman and Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces*, pp. 93-96, 106-108; *Soviet Military Power*, 1988, pp. 15, 47-49.

<sup>17</sup>Stephen M. Meyer, "Soviet Nuclear Operations," in Ashton Carter et al., eds., *Managing Nuclear Operations* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987), p. 494.

Once at sea, the vast majority of the Soviet strategic missile submarines is reportedly significantly noisier than U.S. SSBNs or attack submarines (SSNs). Noise makes the Soviet submarines vulnerable to possible acoustic detection and attack by U.S. antisubmarine warfare (ASW) systems, an area in which the United States long enjoyed a considerable technological edge.

Recognizing the vulnerability of their submarines, since the mid-1970s the Soviets have relied on the bastion or enclave defense approach noted earlier, in which submarines, surface ships, and airborne ASW assets are used in combination to protect the Delta and Typhoon SSBNs, which can hold U.S. targets at risk from the Barents and White seas off the Kola Peninsula in the northwest and from the Sea of Okhotsk in the Far East. Since the early 1980s, the Soviets have reportedly deployed some of their SSBNs beneath the arctic icecap where ASW detection and tracking is more difficult, and have developed techniques for launching their SLBMs from this area.

The Soviet long-range strategic submarine force in mid-1988 consisted of five Typhoon submarines, each with 20 SS-N-20 (six or nine MIRVs), four Delta IV submarines, each with 16 SS-N-23 (four MIRVs), 14 Delta III submarines, each with 16 SS-N-18 (three or seven MIRVs); four Delta IIs, each with 16 SS-N-8 (single RV); 18 Delta Is, each with 12 SS-N-8; and 16 Yankees, each carrying 16 SS-N-6 (single RV).<sup>18</sup> In the years ahead, the number of weapons carried by this element of the Soviet strategic triad will increase substantially with the continuing deployments of the MIRVed SS-N-20 and SS-N-23 missiles on Typhoon and Delta IV submarines, while Yankee- and earlier Delta-class submarines carrying single RV missiles will likely be retired.

#### **Intercontinental Bomber Force**

The least powerful element of the Soviet long-range strategic arsenal has long been its intercontinental bomber force. Yet with the continuing deployments of modern air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) and the likely addition of a new heavy bomber, the Blackjack, this force is in the process of a dramatic expansion. The backbone of the Soviet bomber force remains the Tu-95 Bear, the majority of which were produced in the 1950s.

In recent years the Soviets have resumed production of the Bear in the form of the "H" model, which carries eight long-range, second-generation AS-15 ALCMs with capabilities similar to the U.S. ALCM. Seventy Bear H, as well as 95 older Bear A, B, C,

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<sup>18</sup>*Soviet Military Power*, 1988, pp. 47-49.

and G model bombers, carrying two to six gravity bombs or older cruise missiles were in active service in summer 1988. Eleven prototypes of the new Blackjack bombers have been produced and flight-tested; substantial numbers of this bomber, which will likely carry modern cruise missiles, short-range attack missiles, or gravity bombs, apparently will be added to the Soviet central strategic forces in the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>19</sup>

The bombers are supported by a modest aerial refueling tanker force of some 30 Bison and 20 Tu-16 Badger converted bombers. These tanker capabilities are being improved significantly with the deployment of the new Midas tanker, an aerial refueling variant of the Il-76 Candid transport aircraft.

### **Regional Nuclear Capabilities**

The Soviets also maintain sizable regional strategic nuclear forces capable of striking targets in Europe and Asia. At this point, the land-based element still includes over 400 road-mobile SS-20 intermediate-range missiles, each carrying three MIRVs; roughly two-thirds of these are deployed in garrisons in the USSR within range of Europe; the remainder cover targets in Asia. All of these missiles will be dismantled and destroyed by June 1991 in accordance with the INF treaty.

The centerpiece of the bomber component is the Tu-22M Backfire bomber, whose deployment began in the mid-1970s. The 290 Tu-22Ms are split roughly equally between the Air Forces' "shock" air armies of the Supreme High Command and Soviet Naval Aviation. These missile and bomber systems are supplemented by 407 Tu-16 Badger and Tu-22 Blinder bombers in the two regional air armies, and 260 Tu-22 Blinder and Tu-16 Badger bombers in Soviet Naval Aviation. Thirteen older Golf II submarines carrying three single RV SS-N-5 missiles provide a sea-based component for regional nuclear strike operations in Europe and Asia.<sup>20</sup>

## **STRATEGIC DEFENSE**

### **Air Defense Forces**

The Soviets have long maintained a large and expensive strategic air- and missile-defense capability. In 1988, the Air Defense Forces fielded a combined force of some 9000 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), 2250 fighter-interceptors, and a comprehensive radar early warning and control network to defend the Soviet homeland against enemy aircraft. The Air

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 50-51; *The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, pp. 34, 207.

<sup>20</sup>*The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, pp. 33, 34.

Defense Forces also control the antiballistic missile (ABM) system deployed around Moscow and the co-orbital antisatellite system based at the Tyuratam space complex and operational since the early 1970s. Since a reorganization in the late 1970s, the Air Defense Forces have also been responsible for training and equipping the mobile SAM units that provide the ground-based air defense coverage for Soviet ground force units.

Despite their enormous exertions to erect a vast antiaircraft defense network for protection of the USSR, the Soviets have only recently begun to build a defense that would be likely to work against U.S. B-52 bombers penetrating at low levels. They have also finally begun to correct their chronic low-altitude deficiency through the fielding of (1) the modern Mainstay airborne warning and control system (AWACS) based on the Il-76 Candid; (2) "look-down, shoot-down" capabilities and improved air-to-air missiles on the MiG-31 Foxhound, Su-27 Flanker, and MiG-29 Fulcrum fighters; and (3) new, more effective surface-to-air missiles, the SA-10 and the SA-12A.<sup>21</sup>

With the deployment of these systems in substantial numbers, Soviet strategic air defenses will become considerably more effective against aircraft and cruise missiles penetrating at low altitude by the end of the 1980s. We do not know, however, whether these upgraded air defenses will work against the U.S. B-1B bomber and ALCM, let alone against the stealthy B-2 bomber or the stealthy advanced cruise missiles that are slated to be added to the U.S. arsenal in the 1990s.

### **Ballistic Missile Defenses**

The Soviets are also significantly upgrading their ABM and ballistic missile attack warning and tracking capabilities. These capabilities currently consist of a series of infrared launch detection satellites and 11 older Hen House radars located at six sites in the Soviet Union. The latter radars are being supplemented with a new network of nine modern, large phased-array radars (LPARs) which are in varying stages of completion. This network will provide complete 360° coverage around the USSR when it becomes fully operational in the mid-1990s.<sup>22</sup>

The radar network includes the notorious Krasnoyarsk radar, which is located in south central Siberia and oriented northeast, looking across some 4000 kilometers of Soviet territory. This configuration clearly violates Article VI of the ABM treaty, which stipulates that ballistic missile early-warning and tracking radars must be located around the periphery

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<sup>21</sup>*Soviet Military Power*, 1988, pp. 80-82.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 56.

of each superpower's territory and oriented outward. (The other eight new Soviet LPARs conform to these ABM treaty provisions.) The U.S. has repeatedly called this violation to the attention of the Soviets and demanded that the Krasnoyarsk radar be completely dismantled. The Soviets announced they had halted work on the radar in 1987 and have offered to convert it into an internationally manned space tracking facility. They have not, however, officially acknowledged that it violates the ABM treaty or indicated a willingness to dismantle it.

The Soviets are developing a variety of ABM systems. The only deployed system is the Galosh complex, which has been emplaced around Moscow since the late 1960s. It is currently being improved and expanded from 64 missile-interceptor launchers to the full 100 interceptor launchers permitted under the ABM treaty. Two new interceptor missiles, the long-range modified Galosh and high-acceleration Gazelle, both housed in underground launch silos, are being deployed and a new large, phased-array, Pillbox battle management radar located near Pushkino has been added.<sup>23</sup>

The Soviets have also developed the ABM-X-3 system, the original development and testing of which dates from the early 1970s. Although testing of this system, which includes the Gazelle high-acceleration missile and the transportable Flat Twin and Pawn Shop radars, has reportedly been halted, it could be deployed to defend a selected region in a matter of several months.

The deployment of a series of regional ABM-X-3 sites, integrated with the existing ballistic missile detection and tracking network reviewed above, however, would almost certainly take several years. Such a deployment would, of course, violate the ABM treaty. In light of the obvious Soviet desire, so evident in the Geneva negotiations, to preserve and even strengthen the ABM treaty as a means to limit U.S. high technology ballistic missile defense research efforts under the Strategic Defense Initiative, Soviet incentives for "breaking out" from the treaty appear extremely low.

### **Antisubmarine Warfare**

Soviet acoustic ASW capabilities remain by all reports grossly inadequate for the task of locating U.S. SSBNs. This shortcoming almost certainly lay behind the Soviet decision to reorient the use of these ASW forces to help defend the Soviet SSBNs in nearby waters using the bastion defense concept. Perhaps spurred on by these difficulties, the Soviets have been investigating various nonacoustic means for submarine detection.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-57.

<sup>24</sup>"ASW: Is the US Lead Slipping?" *Armed Forces Journal International*, April 1980, pp. 46-47.

In the mid-1980s, the Soviets achieved a major advance in the quieting of their attack submarines in the new Akula and Sierra classes. The deployment of the Akulas and Sierras in substantial numbers by the 1990s will add new uncertainties to the undersea war. Given the magnitude of the U.S. effort in SLBMs and the high priority the Soviets assign to damage limitation, they will undoubtedly continue to devote substantial efforts in an attempt to make a breakthrough in strategic ASW.

### **Civil Defense**

Soviet civil defense efforts, as noted earlier, although supervised by a directorate in the Ministry of Defense, involve the participation of many other organizations, including elements of the party and government bureaucracies as well as most urban-based economic enterprises and educational institutions. In and around Moscow, the Soviets have constructed a series of deep underground complexes for the protection of the central leadership.<sup>25</sup>

The Soviets have also provided more traditional underground fallout shelters in or near major urban areas for the political and military leadership and a share of the essential work force. They have reportedly constructed more than 1500 bunkers throughout the USSR to protect more than 175,000 key party and government personnel.<sup>26</sup> They apparently intend to rely on large-scale dispersal and evacuation, followed by the construction of temporary shelters in the countryside for the protection of the majority of the populace.

The books and pamphlets published by the full-time Soviet civil defense bureaucracy are generally optimistic about the ability of the Soviet Union to survive and function effectively in a postnuclear war environment. Western analyses of Soviet war survival capabilities are considerably less optimistic in this regard, although they generally agree that if circumstances permitted the Soviets a week or so to implement their full range of protective measures, they could appreciably limit fatalities, perhaps to a few tens of millions. These efforts could not, however, prevent them from suffering massive industrial damage.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>*Soviet Military Power*, 1988, pp. 59-61.

<sup>26</sup>*Soviet Military Power*, 1987, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup>Results of a U.S. government interagency study released by the director of central intelligence in July 1978 and published in *Soviet Civil Defense*, Special Report no. 47 (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1978).



## **THEATER FORCES**

The traditional backbone of Russian military power was its large army, staffed by masses of hardy peasants and frequently supported by large concentrations of field artillery. The Soviet Army continues to reflect its Russian heritage: It is large, its conscript soldiers are tough, and it has impressive firepower, both conventional and nuclear. But it is much more than that.

Today's Soviet Army has been fully motorized and equipped with a wide variety of highly effective tanks and armored fighting vehicles, as well as some of the world's most modern tactical missiles, antitank weapons, and mobile air defense missiles and guns. Moreover, it is supported by a large and increasingly capable tactical air arm, whose major elements are the fighter-interceptors, fighter-bombers, and armed helicopters. The net result is the world's largest and most powerful standing army, led by a well-trained, dedicated officer corps and prepared to wage armor-heavy, blitzkrieg warfare with considerable air support in various theaters around the Soviet Union.

### **Ground Forces**

As the USSR approaches the 1990s, the Soviet ground forces field a total of 214 divisions, of which 52 are tank divisions, 150 motorized rifle, 7 airborne, and 5 unmanned mobilization base divisions. On December 7, 1988, Gorbachev announced the Soviet intention to withdraw and disband six tank divisions deployed in Eastern Europe in 1989-1990 in the context of a larger reduction in military manpower and selected armaments, which may ultimately result in the elimination of additional divisions.

The Soviet divisions are deployed in the 16 military districts of the USSR, in Eastern Europe, and in Mongolia. Within the Soviet Union, the heaviest concentrations are in the European USSR (the Baltic, Byelorussian, Carpathian, Kiev, Leningrad, Odessa, and Moscow military districts), where 97 divisions are posted, and facing China (the Central Asian, Siberian, Transbaikal, and Far Eastern military districts, plus the army in Mongolia), where there are 56 divisions.<sup>28</sup>

The Soviet divisions differ in composition. The largest, best-equipped units are posted with the groups of forces in Eastern Europe. A fully equipped motorized rifle division in Eastern Europe contains approximately 13,000 troops and up to 271 main battle tanks, while a fully equipped tank division is staffed by 11,000 personnel and equipped with

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<sup>28</sup>*The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, pp. 34, 39-45.

up to 328 tanks.<sup>29</sup> Divisions inside the USSR are somewhat smaller, with varying numbers of troops and equipment. The seven airborne divisions, all posted inside the Soviet Union, number approximately 7,000 troops each; they are equipped with their own specially designed, light-armored fighting vehicles and artillery and are supported by the transport aircraft of Military Transport Aviation (VTA).

Not all of the 214 divisions of the Soviet Armed Forces are fully staffed. The Soviets maintain three degrees of readiness: Category 1 divisions are more than 75 percent manned and fully equipped; Category 2 divisions are between 50 percent and 75 percent staffed and fully stocked; and Category 3 divisions are only 25 percent staffed and, if fully equipped, much of the equipment is obsolete. The Category 1 divisions can be brought to full manning within 24 hours. The Category 2 units can be filled out with mobilized reservists within a few weeks. The Category 3 divisions can be brought up to full strength in eight to nine weeks by the mobilization of the extensive reserve system, as was done in late fall 1979 to provide the bulk of the troops for the forces that invaded Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup>

All 30 divisions in Eastern Europe as of January 1989 are maintained at Category 1. Some 20 percent of the divisions in the European USSR are kept in categories 1 or 2. The vast majority of divisions throughout the remainder of the USSR are apparently in Category 3.<sup>31</sup>

In peacetime these divisions, along with their supporting aviation elements, are controlled by the commanders of the groups of forces or military districts, who operate under the direction of the General Staff. In time of war, the divisions under all of the groups of forces and most of the military districts would be filled out as necessary with reservists and integrated into fronts. The fronts, composed of four to five combined-arms armies and a tank army, that is, approximately 20 to 25 motorized rifle and tank divisions, along with air-support and other combat and support elements, would move out to conduct offensive operations in adjacent theaters of military operations.

The airborne divisions, although an element of the ground forces, appear to fall under the direct control of the minister of defense. In wartime they may be attached to a field command—a front or a TVD high command—or remain under the direct control of the Supreme High Command in Moscow.

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

## Armaments

The steady improvement of the armaments of the armed forces amply reflects the level of Soviet investment in defense. Not only have the Soviets purchased the large numbers of weapons systems needed to equip this two-million-man army, but they have steadily improved the quality of these armaments.

As a result, the latest Soviet main battle tanks, the T-64, T-72, and T-80, the BMP fighting vehicle, the self-propelled 122-mm and 152-mm howitzers, the mobile air defense systems—the SA-11, SA-12A, SA-13, SA-14, and SA-16 missile systems and ZSU 23/4 self-propelled antiaircraft gun—and their SS-21 and SS-23 tactical missiles are all among the most modern and capable in the world. In addition, the Soviets have taken very seriously the prospects of warfare with weapons of mass destruction, that is, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and their forces are extensively trained and equipped to fight in these environments.<sup>32</sup>

In sum, the continuing accumulation of new equipment has significantly increased both the firepower and the mobility of the Soviet combined-arms assault formations. These formations are now capable of massing sufficient armored vehicles and conventional fire support on the main axes of attack to meet their armament norms, that is, the 3:1 to 5:1 margins of local superiority called for by their conservative military doctrine.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, they are prepared to undertake their multiple-breakthrough offensive strategy with conventional firepower alone or with the support of nuclear weapons.

## Tactical Aviation

Soviet tactical aviation, designed largely to support the land battle, consists of some 4920 combat aircraft.<sup>34</sup> In recent years, the quality of these aircraft, like that of all the other elements of Soviet military power, has improved dramatically. The addition in the 1970s and 1980s of the third-generation aircraft—the multipurpose MiG-23 Flogger B; the late-model MiG-21 Fishbed J, K, L, and N; the Su-17 Fitter C; the MiG-27 Flogger D; and the

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<sup>32</sup>John Erickson, "The Soviet Union's Growing Arsenal of Chemical Warfare," *Strategic Review*, Fall 1979, pp. 63-71.

<sup>33</sup>John Erickson, "Doctrine, Technology and Style," in *Soviet Military Power and Performance*, John Erickson and E. J. Feuchtwanger, eds. (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), pp. 20-22; and "Soviet Breakthrough Operations: Resources and Restraints," *Royal United Services Institution Journal* (London), September 1976, p. 74.

<sup>34</sup>*The Military Balance, 1987-1988*, p. 36.

Su-24 Fencer—enormously increased the range and payload capabilities of ground attack aircraft.<sup>35</sup>

The look-down, shoot-down fighters and the Mainstay airborne warning and control platforms, deployed in the 1980s, could protect ground force formations from enemy air attack. In addition, since the 1970s the Soviets, clearly emulating U.S. developments of the 1960s, have built up a large force of armed helicopter gunships, including the highly capable Mi-24 Hind A, D, and E and a gunship version of the Mi-8 Hip. These attack/assault helicopters are equipped for antitank and other fire support missions.<sup>36</sup> As of the late 1980s, the Soviets are about to add two new attack helicopters, the Mi-28 Havoc and the Hokum, the latter of which is credited with an air intercept capability against other helicopters.

Soviet fighter, bomber, and helicopter aviation was reorganized in the late 1970s. Today the Soviet Air Forces include the five "shock" air armies of the Supreme High Command, noted above; the air forces attached to each of the military districts in the USSR and to the groups of Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe; and military transport aviation.

The air forces of the military districts and the groups of Soviet forces include attack helicopters, which are the backbone of a recently resurrected branch of the air forces called army aviation. In time of war the vast majority of these armed helicopters, possibly in combination with fixed-wing Su-25 Frogfoot ground attack aircraft, will be directly subordinated to ground force commanders to provide close air support to maneuver units engaged with enemy forces.

Four of the five air armies of the V GK are postured to provide support to the TVD high commands in Europe and Asia. The air armies headquartered in Legnica, Poland, and Vinnitsa in the Soviet Ukraine, are composed of fighter-bombers, in particular the Su-24 Fencer, fighter-interceptors, and reconnaissance aircraft; they apparently are prepared to support campaigns fought with conventional or nuclear weapons in the Western and Southwestern TVDs, respectively.

The air army headquartered in Smolensk controls the regional strategic Backfire, Blinder, and Badger medium bombers, which can carry out conventional or nuclear strikes throughout the European theater. The fourth theater-oriented air army, headquartered in

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<sup>35</sup>Berman, *Soviet Air Power in Transition*, p. 32; William Schneider, Jr., "Trends in Soviet Frontal Aviation," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1979, pp. 76-81.

<sup>36</sup>Lynn M. Hansen, "Soviet Combat Helicopter Operations," *International Defense Review*, August 1978, pp. 1242-1246; Christopher N. Donnelly, "The Soviet Helicopter on the Battlefield," *International Defense Review*, May 1984, pp. 559-566.

Irkutsk, controls the full range of fighter-bomber, fighter-interceptor, and reconnaissance aircraft, as well as medium bombers. Its units could operate throughout South Asia and the Far East. The fifth and final air army, headquartered in Moscow, controls the heavy Bear and Bison bombers, which are prepared to carry out intercontinental strikes against the United States or to attack major enemy naval formations at sea.<sup>37</sup>

The air forces of the military districts and groups of forces include fighter-bombers, fighter-interceptors, reconnaissance aircraft, transport and attack helicopters, and electronic countermeasures aircraft. The largest of these, the air force attached to the Group of Soviet Forces Germany, is reported to have 685 aircraft. The commanders of these air forces serve as the deputy commanders for air of the military district or group of forces.

Many of the aircraft of these air forces, in combination with the fighters, fighter-bombers, and medium bombers of the four regional "shock" air armies, and possibly conventionally armed tactical ballistic missiles as well, may be employed in large-scale air operations with conventional weapons, as discussed above. In addition, they may be employed independently to attain air superiority over the main axes of attack or to interdict reserve forces, key command posts, and logistics support in the enemy's rear. Armed helicopters and, to a lesser degree, fixed-wing attack aircraft would provide close air support for the ground forces mounting the initial break-in attacks or exploitation forces driving deep behind enemy lines.

## NAVAL FORCES

While all elements of the Soviet Armed Forces have steadily increased their capabilities over the past two decades, none has done so more dramatically than the Soviet Navy. Not only has the Navy's nuclear striking power expanded enormously with the deployment of the Yankee-, Delta-, and Typhoon-class nuclear-powered strategic missile submarines, discussed above, but the general purpose naval capabilities have significantly improved as well. The Soviets have attained a genuine blue-water capability based on a force of 274 modern surface warships of the light frigate class or larger.

These warships include the first of a new class of large, angle-decked Tbilisi-class carriers now undergoing shakedown sea trials, four Kiev-class light aircraft carriers equipped with vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) Yak-36 Forger aircraft; two Moskva-class ASW cruisers; a host of guided missile-equipped Slava-, Kirov-, and Kara-class cruisers; several types of destroyers, including the newer Udaloy and

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<sup>37</sup>Mark L. Urban, "Major Reorganization of Soviet Air Forces," *International Defense Review*, June 1983, p. 756.

Sovremenny classes; improved logistics support and amphibious ships, including the Berezina-class fleet oiler and the Ivan Rogov-class amphibious assault transport; and a variety of cruise-missile- and torpedo-equipped attack submarines the most impressive of which are the large Oscar-class cruise missile carrier, the high-speed titanium-hulled Alpha-class attack submarine and the new, quiet Akula- and Sierra-class SSNs.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, land-based Soviet Naval Aviation has been improved with the addition of the Backfire bomber and the Fencer fighter-bomber.

These new vessels and aircraft have allowed the Soviet Union to increase significantly its visible peacetime ocean presence throughout the world. More important, they provide the Soviet Navy with greatly enhanced capabilities to fulfill its various wartime missions—protecting its SSBNs in their bastions, mounting nuclear strikes against the United States, neutralizing U.S. carrier task forces, combating American strategic and attack submarines, interdicting the enemy's sea lines of communications, repelling any amphibious assault attempted against the USSR, and conducting amphibious operations along the flanks of its advancing land armies and against such key islands as Iceland.

In addition to improving its naval vessels and aircraft, the Soviet Navy has dramatically revised its operational concepts and deployment patterns. Michael McGwire, a leading Western expert on Soviet naval policy, captures these shifts in analyzing the steady expansion of the "Soviet maritime defense perimeter" over the past 25 years.

According to McGwire, U.S. carrier and long-range SLBM deployments have compelled the Soviets to expand their operations beyond their traditional "inner defense zone," that is, the waters close to the USSR, where local superiority readily permits them command of these seas. They have been forced, instead, to extend greatly their normal operating areas, thus creating an "outer defense zone" that reaches into the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Western Pacific in order to counter these U.S. strike systems.<sup>39</sup> This process has resulted in a truly ocean-going Soviet naval capability, with obvious potential wartime applications and peacetime uses that have been clearly recognized and increasingly utilized by the Soviet leadership.

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<sup>38</sup>*Soviet Military Power*, 1988, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup>Michael McGwire, "Soviet Naval Doctrine and Strategy," in *Soviet Military Thinking*, D. Leebaert, ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981).

## FORCE PROJECTION

The Soviets have also significantly improved their ability to project military power. Their capability for moving military power into areas adjacent to the Soviet Union is inherent in their extensive theater warfare capabilities discussed earlier. Their moves into Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979, for example, involved the application of land and air forces that were trained and equipped to wage theater warfare on the Soviet periphery.

The more dramatic improvements in Soviet force projection have occurred with regard to their ability to move military forces over long distances, well beyond the Soviet frontier. This improvement has involved the acquisition of new, long-range air and sea transport, as well as the development of an embryonic overseas basing infrastructure and the accumulation of greatly increased experience in undertaking such operations.

On the air capabilities side, the major developments have been the addition to military transport aviation of the An-22 Cock heavy turboprop transport aircraft, the Il-76 Candid jet medium transport, and An-124 Condor wide-bodied jet transport. On the naval capabilities side, the Soviets have added improved transports, including "roll-on, roll-off" ships to their merchant marine and several new vessels to the Soviet Navy that can be used to project power ashore, including the Kiev-class carriers and the Ivan Rogov-class amphibious ships.<sup>40</sup>

These improved airlift and sealift capabilities, although relatively few in number, are well suited for use by portions of the seven Soviet airborne divisions. They may also be used by the naval infantry, the 18,000-troop component of the Soviet Navy that is specifically trained and equipped for amphibious assault operations.

The USSR's increased political and military involvement in several Third World countries has enhanced its long-distance power projection. These involvements have yielded significant experience in long-distance movements of troops and equipment, for example, Soviet assistance in air transporting Cuban troops to Angola in 1975-1976 and in Soviet movements of military advisers and equipment by air and sea to such arms assistance clients as Ethiopia, Libya, Vietnam, Iraq, and South Yemen.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Dennis M. Gormley, "The Direction and Pace of Soviet Force Projection Capabilities," *Survival*, November/December 1982, pp. 266-276; *Soviet Military Power*, 1986, pp. 93-98.

<sup>41</sup>David Halevy, "Soviet Airlift in Ethiopia, Aden Reported," *Washington Star*, September 23, 1979, p. 3; Stephen S. Kaplan, "The Historical Record," and Colin Legum, "Angola and the Horn of Africa," in Stephen S. Kaplan, ed., *Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces As a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1981), pp. 106-107, 195-201, and 570-640.

The buildup of significant overseas stockpiles of modern Soviet weaponry has often accompanied airlift and sealift projections to the Third World. These stockpiles represent de facto prepositioned stocks of armaments that might be made available to Soviet forces rapidly inserted into these areas in the event of a regional crisis or conflict. More recently, expanded Soviet naval operations in the Far East have led to the expansion and continuous use of Vietnamese port and air facilities at Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang.<sup>42</sup>

This combination of improved long-range transport, increased experience in mounting distant operations, and the development of an overseas facilities support structure to assist in such activities provides the Kremlin with greatly increased flexibility in the possible use of military power to advance Soviet interests in the Third World, particularly in a symbolic, noncombat manner. Despite these improvements, however, the Soviet Union continues to have only a limited capability to project military power into distant areas in the face of substantial local or rival power armed opposition. Moreover, for various political and economic reasons, the Soviets have become much more cautious in the Third World during the Gorbachev era. They appear to be avoiding provocative actions that might jeopardize their relations with the West. Consequently, they are unlikely to engage in military adventures abroad of the kind they mounted in the 1970s.

## **ARMS CONTROL**

The Soviet Union has been a vocal champion of arms control and disarmament for many years. Since the late 1950s, it has been involved, virtually continuously, in a variety of international arms control negotiations. Both inside and outside these negotiations, the Soviets have consistently asserted that they favor dramatic progress toward substantial disarmament.

### **Gorbachev's Initiatives**

Gorbachev has been particularly active in arms control, offering a continuous stream of proposals, some highly utopian, others more pragmatic. One of the most utopian proposals was Gorbachev's ambitious three-stage plan for total global nuclear disarmament by the year 2000, presented in January 1986.<sup>43</sup> Nine months later, in the last hours of the Reykjavik "presummit," he took a page from his earlier offer and called for the complete elimination of U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear arms within a ten-year period.

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<sup>42</sup>*Soviet Military Power*, 1986, p. 138.

<sup>43</sup>"Statement by M. S. Gorbachev," *Pravda*, January 16, 1986.



In 1986 and 1987, Gorbachev also pressed for less visionary but nevertheless substantial reductions in nuclear offensive arms. These proposals culminated in the signing of the "double zero" Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at the Washington summit in December 1987. This agreement will eliminate all U.S. and Soviet land-based missiles with ranges between 500 and 5500 kilometers by mid-1991. It also provides for unprecedented verification measures, including continuous on-site monitoring of selected missile production facilities and short-notice on-site challenge inspections.

Gorbachev's pragmatism has also helped produce substantial U.S.-Soviet agreement on a draft treaty in the Strategic Arms Reductions Talks. The agreed framework for the so-called 50 percent cut/6000 accountable weapons agreement, thanks to permissive counting rules for bombers, would in fact probably reduce each superpower's inventory of central strategic weapons by only 20 to 30 percent. To conclude such an agreement, the superpowers will almost certainly need to work out satisfactory deals to limit sea-launched cruise missiles and to preserve the ABM treaty, thus placing some restraints on the testing and deployment of space-based ballistic missile defense systems throughout most of the 1990s.

The Soviets have also protected themselves against charges that in pressing for the conclusion of agreements significantly reducing nuclear weapons they are simply seeking to make the world safe for Soviet conventional superiority: They have proposed major reductions in conventional arms as well. They have made their moves in this area in the context of collective Warsaw Pact proposals, in Budapest in June 1986, in Berlin in May 1987, in Warsaw in July 1988, and finally at the opening of the talks between the member states of NATO and the Warsaw Pact on reducing Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) in Vienna in March 1989. The Pact's opening conventional arms proposal at the CFE talks calls for a three-stage disarmament process beginning with an agreement to implement asymmetrical reductions to eliminate imbalances in selected "offensive" arms—in particular tanks, "strike" aviation, artillery, armored infantry vehicles, and combat helicopters—that NATO and Warsaw Pact member states deploy throughout Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals."

Even more ambitiously, the Pact's proposal calls for additional large-scale reductions on both sides and ultimately a fundamental restructuring of the forces of the Warsaw Pact and NATO so that neither side could mount a surprise attack or conduct any large-scale offensive operations. This proposal is all the more striking because, were it to be implemented, it would mean a complete dismantling of the conventional blitzkrieg capabilities that the Soviets have worked so long and hard to acquire.

The Soviet military establishment could hardly view the possibility of such large-scale cuts, however remote, with much favor. If eventually faced with the necessity to make substantial ground force reductions, the Soviet military might implement the "leaner" battalion-brigade-corps structure with which they are currently experimenting, noted above.

#### **Organizations and People Involved in Policymaking and Negotiation**

The development of arms control policy appears to be an area in Soviet defense policymaking that is open to a wider circle of organizations beyond the familiar lineup of the Ministry of Defense, the defense-industrial organs, and the senior party leadership, described above. Since contemporary arms control involves extended international negotiations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has played an important role. In recent years, various scientists and scholars connected with the Academy of Sciences, including those who have been active in the discussions of "new political thinking" and "reasonable sufficiency," have participated increasingly in arms control discussions.<sup>44</sup>

Senior representatives from the Foreign Ministry have generally been in charge of Soviet negotiating delegations and, in most cases, have provided the majority of the delegates. This latter pattern was most notably breached during the two lengthy rounds of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, SALT I and SALT II, when the military provided two of the six chief Soviet delegates and the defense-industrial sector an additional two.<sup>45</sup> Senior military officers continued to serve as important delegates at the START, INF, and Space/Defense talks in the 1980s. Nevertheless, even in all of these talks, the delegation chief has always been a career diplomat.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>The latter group, led originally by the Commission for Scientific Problems of Disarmament and more recently by the Committee Against the Nuclear Threat and for Peace, includes several prominent Soviet scientists, scholars, and members of the academy's social science institutes. Apparently these people are consulted on arms control matters and frequently participate in international conferences such as those sponsored annually by the Pugwash U.S.-USSR Study Group on Arms Control and Disarmament and by several other bilateral and multilateral exchanges with the West. See Warner, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics*, pp. 222-224.

<sup>45</sup>The military delegates have included Marshal N. V. Ogarkov and Col. Gen. N. N. Alekseyev, both of whom were active in SALT I. The defense industry figures included Academician A. N. Shchukin, a leading weapons development scientist, and Petr Pleshakov, then a deputy minister and subsequently the minister of the radio industry.

<sup>46</sup>The post was held by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs V. S. Semyonov from 1969 until 1978 and subsequently by Ambassador V. P. Karpov, who served through the completion of the SALT II negotiations in June 1979, and again in the START and Geneva negotiations throughout the early and mid-1980s.

A rare example of unusual military prominence in the arms control area occurred at the Reagan-Gorbachev "presummit" at Reykjavik in October 1986 and continued in high-level U.S.-Soviet meetings during 1987 and 1988. During crucial negotiating sessions between "expert" delegations from both sides, the Soviet team was consistently led by Marshal S. F. Akhromeyev, then chief of the General Staff. His performance has been described by American participants as "tough and decisive," with Akhromeyev apparently being fully in command of the Soviet side despite the presence of senior foreign ministry personnel.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the leading role it generally plays in the negotiations process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by no means dominates the formulation of Soviet arms control policy in Moscow. The Foreign Ministry's arms control and disarmament directorate, created in 1986 and headed by veteran negotiator Viktor Karpov, reportedly participates in the development of Soviet bargaining positions in various negotiations. The Ministry of Defense, in particular, the General Staff, the defense-industrial organs, the Defense Council, and, ultimately, the Politburo play key roles in the interagency formulation of Soviet arms control objectives and bargaining positions.<sup>48</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s, the major efforts of Soviet arms control policy focused on the bilateral SALT/START, INF, and Defense/Space negotiations with the United States. The Soviets also played a leading role in the multilateral East-West talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in Central Europe and on confidence- and security-building measures that were conducted at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and in the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Personal discussions with Ambassador Paul Nitze and Colonel Robert Linhart, who participated in these negotiations in 1986, 1987, and 1988.

<sup>48</sup>For discussions of Soviet organizations involved in SALT, see Warner, *The Military in Contemporary Soviet Politics*, pp. 237-244; Raymond L. Garthoff, "SALT and the Soviet Military," *Problems of Communism*, January-February 1975, pp. 21-37; and Thomas W. Wolfe, *The SALT Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1979); Rose E. Gottemoeller, "Decisionmaking for Arms Limitation in the Soviet Union," in Hans G. Brauch and Duncan L. Clarke, eds., *Decisionmaking for Arms Limitation: Assessments and Prospects* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 53-80.

<sup>49</sup>Others included negotiations with the United States and the United Kingdom on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, with the United States on an antisatellite warfare regime, limitations on conventional arms transfers, and chemical warfare limits, and participation in the United Nations continuing Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

In all of these negotiations, the Soviets sought to attain both the broad political goals and narrower security-related objectives discussed above. With regard to their specific negotiating tactics, despite their repeated calls for agreements based on the "principle of equal security," the Soviets have quite unsurprisingly persistently sought to gain the most advantageous terms possible within the negotiations. They have consistently tried to eliminate or reduce current or projected U.S. attack capabilities that have appeared particularly threatening, such as air-launched, sea-launched, and ground-launched cruise missiles, the MX ICBM, the D-5 SLBM, and the Pershing II INF missiles, while seeking to minimize constraints on their own extensive force modernization efforts.

Nevertheless, when confronted by steadfast U.S. resistance to these demands, the Soviets have proved grudgingly willing to agree to compromises that involved reciprocal limits on both sides. Such was the pattern that emerged in the development of the SALT I, SALT II, and INF agreements and has been evident in the START negotiations.<sup>50</sup>

## THE USE OF FORCE

### Combat Involvement

Since the superpower status of the USSR rests, to a considerable degree, on its massive military power, it is not surprising that the Soviets have frequently used this power to protect and advance their interests on the world scene. As noted earlier, the Soviet leaders, like their czarist predecessors, have employed their armed forces as an effective instrument of foreign policy. They have, for example, used the force of arms to expand the frontiers of the Soviet Union—to absorb the Baltic states and portions of Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Japan—and to impose and maintain subservient communist regimes beyond these borders in Mongolia and Eastern Europe. Most recently, however, they have failed over a nine-year period to defeat the *mujaheddin* rebels in Afghanistan and have finally withdrawn their forces.

The Soviets have also used their military capabilities for other than straightforward armed intervention. During the Russian Civil War, during the border skirmishes with Japan in the late 1930s, and, of course, following the German invasion in 1941, they were forced to rely on the Red Army to defend their control of Soviet territory.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, their steadily

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<sup>50</sup>For an analysis of the agreed START framework and the remaining unresolved issues in those negotiations, see Edward L. Warner III and David A. Ochmanek, *Next Moves: An Arms Control Agenda for the 1990s* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 1988), pp. 17-65.

<sup>51</sup>The battles of Lake Khasan in the Soviet Far East in 1938 and Khalkhin-gol in Mongolia in 1939, in which the Red Army more than held its own against armed probes by

expanding military capabilities have provided a backdrop for Soviet diplomacy; they have also been used effectively for peacetime demonstrations, shows of force during crises, and various types of military assistance to woo incumbent governments, to aid insurgent movements fighting to gain power, and to defend Marxist-Leninist regimes already in power against insurgency movements.

The frequency with which the Soviets have employed their military capabilities for foreign policy ends in situations short of armed conflict in much of the post-World War II period was investigated in a study published by the Brookings Institution. This lengthy analysis found that between June 1944 and June 1979, Soviet military units were used as a policy instrument to influence other international actors on 190 occasions. Among these incidents, 158 involved the deliberate manipulation of Soviet forces as a means to coerce other states, while the remaining 32 cases involved cooperative moves in support of other actors.<sup>52</sup>

The various types of Soviet external military involvements are well reflected in the USSR's relations with the communist movements in China and Vietnam over the past several decades. In both cases, the Soviets provided arms and advisers to these parties when they were struggling to control their nations and again after they had succeeded and were at war with major powers—the Chinese with the United States in Korea, 1950-1953; the Vietnamese with the United States, 1964-1973; and the Vietnamese with the Chinese, 1979. In the Chinese case, the Sino-Soviet relationship shifted from extensive and close cooperation to bitter conflict, culminating in the armed border clashes along the Ussuri River in spring 1969. This relationship has remained one of substantial rivalry and tension until recently.<sup>53</sup>

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the Japanese Kwantung Army, apparently helped to persuade the Japanese not to wage a full-fledged war with the Soviet Union. See Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, pp. 494-499, 517-522, 532-537.

<sup>52</sup>Kaplan, ed., *Diplomacy of Power*, pp. 27-32. The study represents a follow-on effort to similar Brookings examination of U.S. peacetime uses of force in the post-World War II period. See also Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War: U.S. Armed Forces As a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977).

<sup>53</sup>For accounts of the Sino-Soviet and Soviet-Vietnamese military relationships, see Raymond L. Garthoff, ed., *Sino-Soviet Military Relations* (New York: Praeger, 1966); Kaplan, "Historical Record"; William Zimmerman, "The Korean and Vietnam Wars," and Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict," in Kaplan, ed., *Diplomacy of Power*, pp. 67-72, 90-96, 98-105, 107-113, 265-313, 314-356.

### **Military Aid**

While Soviet military assistance activities have their antecedents in the early years of Bolshevik rule, they have increased dramatically in the past 34 years. In the post-Stalin era, the Soviets have come to use arms aid more and more as a means to gain entree to Third World nations. This development is reflected organizationally in the growth of the Tenth Directorate of the General Staff from an organization established to oversee Soviet defense cooperation with its Eastern European communist allies to a body supervising Soviet military assistance to a host of Asian, African, and Latin American nations.<sup>54</sup>

Soviet military assistance has taken various forms, ranging from small-scale weapons sales to massive arms transfers accompanied by large numbers of Soviet advisory personnel. In some cases, it has led to the direct involvement of Soviet military personnel in regional conflicts, as was the case, for example, with Soviet pilots in China flying with the nationalists against the Japanese in the 1930s and in Egyptian dogfights with the Israelis over the Suez Canal in July 1970.<sup>55</sup>

In the mid-1970s, the Soviets diversified their military assistance by combining their own efforts with those of their Cuban allies in joint ventures undertaken in Angola and in Ethiopia. In these cases the Soviets apparently provided the arms, air transport, and financial backing to allow large-scale Cuban troop involvements that were vital to the success of their local clients, Neto's Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Mengistu government in Ethiopia, against internal and regional foes.<sup>56</sup> In Ethiopia, moreover, the successful campaign to drive the Somalis from the Ogaden in 1978 reportedly was planned and directed on the scene by a high-level Soviet military delegation led by General V. I. Petrov, then deputy commander in chief of the ground forces.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers*, trans. Peter Deriabin (New York: Avon Books, 1966), p. 88; *Directory of USSR Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Officials* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1978), p. 4.

<sup>55</sup>Kaplan, "Historical Record," in Kaplan, ed., *Diplomacy of Power*, pp. 170-171; and Ken Booth, *The Military Instrument in Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 1973), p. 35.

<sup>56</sup>Legum, "Angola and the Horn of Africa," in Kaplan, ed., *Diplomacy of Power*, pp. 570-640.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 623-626.

More recently, the Soviets have provided arms and advisers to help defend embattled Marxist-Leninist regimes threatened by internal armed insurgencies. Cuban mercenaries and Soviet military advisers have reportedly been directly involved in periodic MPLA campaigns in Angola against Jonas Savimbi's National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) guerrillas who are backed by the United States and South Africa.

The Soviets are also providing modern arms to the armed forces of their client governments in South Yemen, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Vietnam, all of which face indigenous armed opposition that is being assisted by the West. (In the Vietnamese case, over 100,000 troops from Vietnam have been seeking since 1978 to prop up the puppet communist regime in Cambodia by destroying the armed opposition.) In 1988, Gorbachev participated in major multilateral diplomatic negotiations directed toward resolving the regional conflicts and withdrawing Soviet, Cuban, and Vietnamese forces from Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia, respectively.

The Soviets nevertheless continue to sell large quantities of sophisticated weaponry to a few non-Marxist states, including India, Syria, and Peru, in an attempt to buttress Soviet influence in selected regions. As discussed in the subsection on Force Projection, above, Soviet military assistance activities over the past 20 years have been accompanied by and have themselves facilitated significant improvements in Soviet long-range power projection.

The Soviets have for many years sought to play an active and often interventionary role in trouble spots in Africa and Asia, and their potential for such involvement has increased substantially over the years. Soviet military and political writings of the 1970s reflected a growing Soviet interest in the peacetime political utility of the armed forces.<sup>58</sup> Thus, Marshal A. A. Grechko, then minister of defense, wrote in 1974, with typical hyperbole:

At the present stage, the historical function of the Soviet Armed Forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending our Motherland and other socialist countries. In its foreign policy activity, the Soviet state actively and purposefully opposes the export of counterrevolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggle and resolutely resists imperial aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may occur.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>For a review of these, see William F. Scott and Harriet Fast Scott, *A Review and Assessment of Soviet Policy and Concepts on the Projection of Military Presence and Power* (McLean, Va.: General Research Corporation, 1979).

<sup>59</sup>Marshal A. A. Grechko, "The Leading Role of the CPSU in Building the Army of a Developed Socialist Society," *Voprosy istorii KPSS* (Problems of History of the CPSU), May 1974, p. 38.

During the same period, Admiral S. G. Gorshkov, formerly commander in chief of the Navy, frequently touted the unique virtues of the Navy as a means to promote the "state interests" of the Soviet Union on the international scene. Admiral Gorshkov's claims were not simply idle boasts. They were accompanied by the increased manipulation of naval forces in support of Soviet foreign policy in a wide variety of cases.

The use of naval forces to support Soviet foreign policy initiatives included the establishment of the so-called Guinea Patrol, composed of two destroyers and an oiler, to bolster the beleaguered Sekou Toure government in December 1970 and the convoy movement of Moroccan troops to Syria in 1973. It also included the reactive deployments of Soviet naval task forces to the Bay of Bengal during the Indo-Pakistani War in 1971, off Angola in 1975, in the Mediterranean during the Middle East crises in 1967, 1970, and 1973, and in response to the buildup of U.S. naval forces in the Indian ocean in 1979-1980 following the seizure of the U.S. embassy personnel in Tehran.<sup>60</sup>

During the 1980s, Soviet military activism in the Third World has tapered off significantly. While the Soviets have continued to sell substantial amounts of military equipment, particularly to such well-established clients as India and Syria, they have played down the military case for long-range force projection and involvement. Gorbachev has showed almost no interest in taking on new commitments in this area.

The Soviets sought instead to liquidate or cut back existing commitments in Afghanistan and elsewhere, as noted above. Moreover, frequent criticism was heard in Moscow about the alleged Soviet overreliance on the military instrument at the expense of other elements of its foreign policy. Nevertheless, Soviet military sales and assistance, as well as other peacetime manipulations of military power, will almost certainly remain a significant dimension of Soviet foreign policy in the years ahead.

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<sup>60</sup>David K. Hall, "Naval Diplomacy in West African Waters," in Kaplan, ed., *Diplomacy of Power*, pp. 519-569; McGwire, "Naval Power and Soviet Global Strategy," pp. 52-53. For a comprehensive survey of Soviet naval force projection, see James M. McConnell and Bradford N. Dismukes, eds., *Soviet Naval Diplomacy: From the June War to Angola* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981).



## VI. CONCLUSION

The Soviet Union stands on the brink of the 1990s as one of the world's most militarily powerful nations. For some 25 years, its leaders conducted a sustained, expensive, across-the-board buildup of Soviet military capabilities, albeit at a somewhat reduced pace over the past decade. In this same period, they derived considerable benefits from their growing arsenal in terms of increased international prestige and a repertoire of military activities that has been used effectively to advance Soviet interests on the international scene.

Yet, owing to profound domestic economic, and political crises, the overall strength of the Soviet Union worldwide is increasingly being questioned at home and abroad. Several Soviet commentators have complained about the Kremlin's overreliance on military power in the past and called for a more balanced foreign policy and reductions in the vast Soviet military machine.

The steady growth in military power does not appear to have importantly strengthened the hand of the military on the Soviet domestic scene. On the contrary, growing criticism is being directed at the military in the context of the massive domestic *perestroika* campaign. The military leadership nevertheless remains an extremely important institutional group with clearly recognized expertise and influence regarding the defense matters for which they are primarily responsible. In combination with their defense-industrial partners, they have ample opportunity to express their own clear preferences regarding Soviet investment priorities.

Yet the final decisions regarding defense matters continue to rest with the senior party leadership. The sudden removal of Marshal Ogarkov from his post as chief of the General Staff in September 1984 and the sacking of PVO chief Marshal of Aviation Koldunov and Defense Minister Marshal Sokolov in June 1987 clearly demonstrate the power of the party oligarchs when faced with unacceptable military "lobbying" or dramatic and embarrassing failure. Nevertheless, the marshals will undoubtedly continue to defend and promote their interests, as they define them.

In recent years the Soviets have had difficulty in translating their impressive military capabilities into political leverage. While they remain fully capable of using their overwhelming military force, if required, to maintain order in Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and company appear less inclined than their predecessors to do so.

One is less certain about the manner in which the Soviets are likely to use their military power in the future as a means to deal with other neighboring states or in more distant areas. Their large-scale intervention in Afghanistan entailed heavy human and political costs. Moreover, it has by no means assured the survival of a friendly regime in Kabul, despite nearly nine years of combat with the employment of massive firepower and various tactics.

The move into Afghanistan was not accompanied by an increased Soviet willingness to resort to the direct use of armed forces elsewhere beyond their frontiers. Nevertheless, in light of the improvements in Soviet power projection potential and the virtual certainty that instability will continue to characterize the international political scene, the potential for the use of military power as a means to protect and advance Soviet interests cannot be ruled out.